

FANTASY IMAGE

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TRIPODS

Producer Richard Bates
relates how his love
became a TV series

The Creator of
DOCTOR WHO
and

THE AVENGERS
Sydney Newman
Interviewed

GERRY ANDERSON

We report on the
third convention

Plus **STAR TREK**, "V", **BLAKE'S SEVEN** and more



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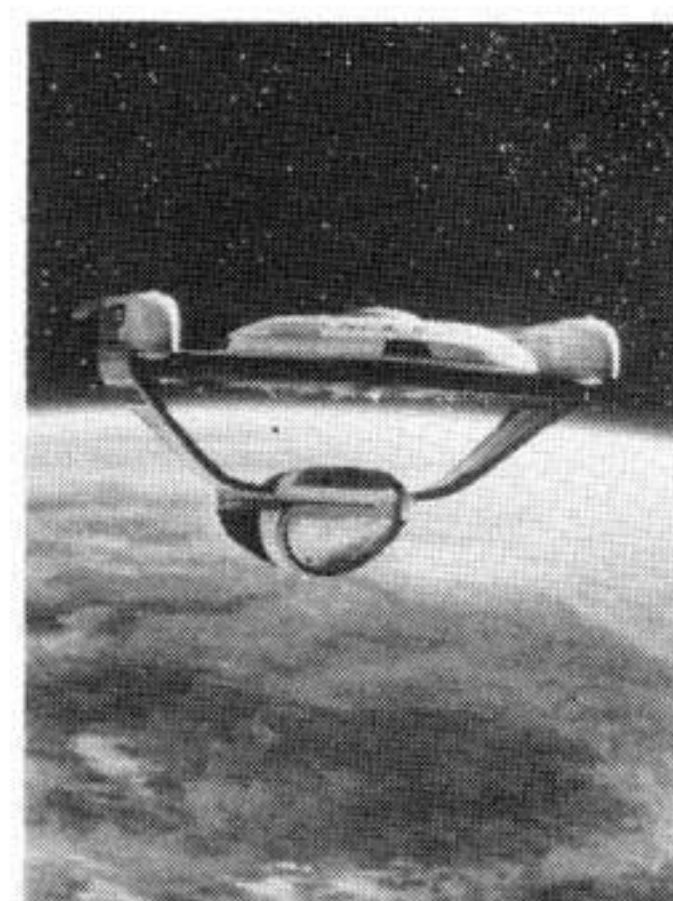
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Front Cover – Doctor Hoo puppets by Stephen Mansfield. Photograph by Stephen Payne

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FANTASY IMAGE

The British magazine based on the visual fantasy worlds

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THE CREATOR

Few people can claim to have started a cult series, but Sydney Newman has created two in his busy and successful career. Canadian born, he came over to Britain in the late fifties joining the commercial television station ABC. He saw that television drama had gone adrift, and set out to change its direction. He produced the *Armchair Theatre* series, bringing in new writers, writers that are now household names. However, he was also Head of Drama and so it was he who had to think up the ideas.

Sydney entered the world of Science Fiction/Fantasy television in Britain when in 1959/60 he decided to do a Science Fiction series. To heighten its popularity he brought in Boris Karloff to introduce and close each story. The series became very successful. His next idea in this area proved to have even more potential...

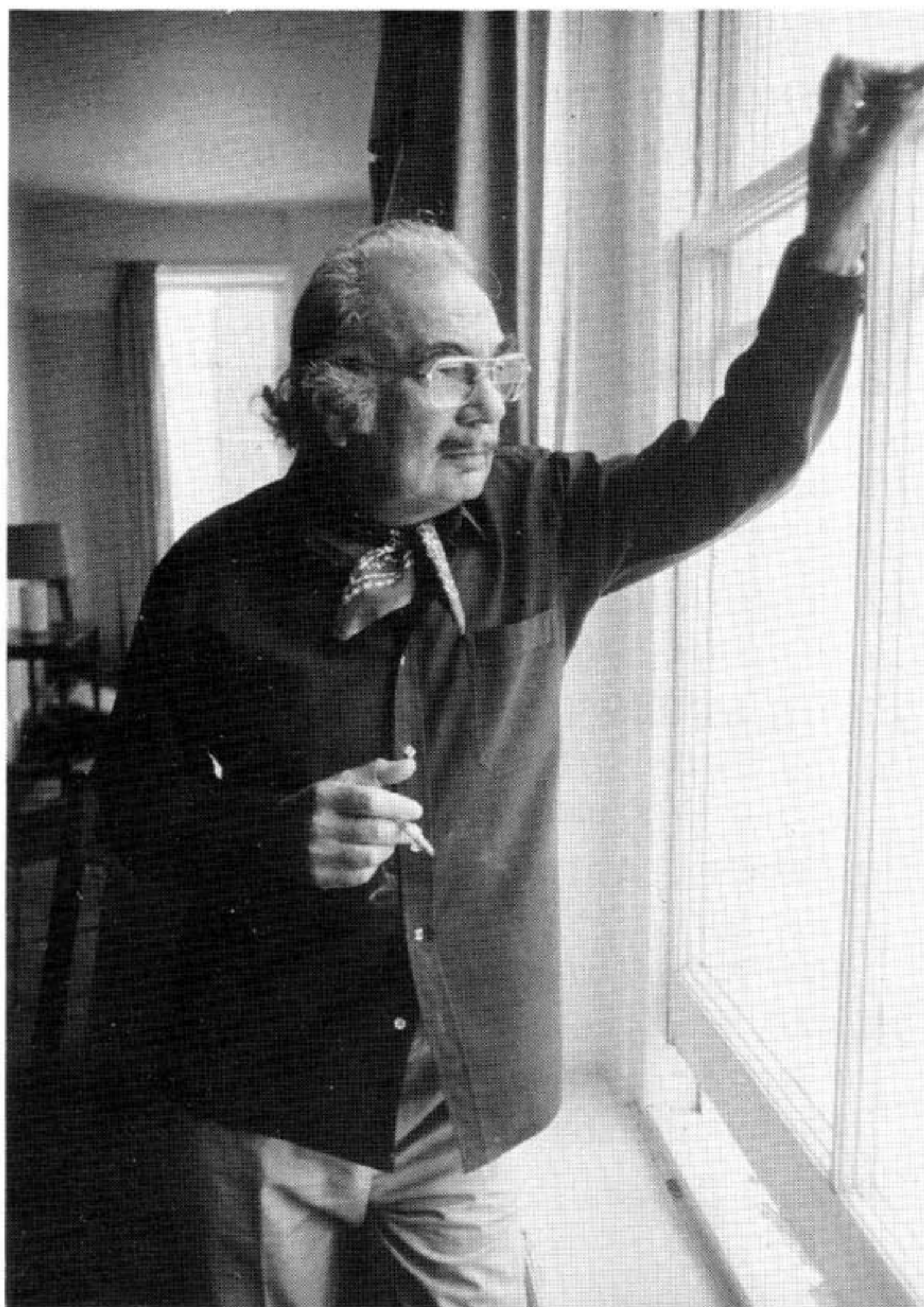
"*The Avengers* came about as the result of a series of accidents and flukes. A guy called Julian Bond came with his agent to see me at ABC Television at Teddington. He had a great idea to marry two ideas then popular – *Emergency Ward 10* and *Dixon of Dock Green*. I said that sounds interesting, a good sales pitch, and he continued that his idea was about a police surgeon, a doctor, who is on special call to the police. We went ahead and cast a young, virtually unknown actor as the doctor, Ian Hendry. There were these police cases which he, even though a doctor, would be called in to solve. We made him a very moral, upright, earnest guy. I found out that the background to Ian Hendry was that he had just come out of National Service and was a stunt motor cyclist. So I said, "Why don't we use his physical skills?" We finished the series on the thirteenth episode, in which his secretary-nurse was killed by some crooks. This was a deliberate plan because I had conceived *The Avengers* to follow. We deliberately introduced Patrick Macnee in the last episode for the new hour-long series. Patrick assisted the doctor, heart-broken at the death of his nurse. Incidentally, Patrick Macnee married the girl that played the nurse later on. Patrick, when he came to Toronto we gave him a lot of work when I was head of drama. So when he turned up in England I immediately cast him opposite Ian Hendry.

"The basic idea was the conflict between the very moral somewhat prudish doctor and the amoral M15 guy. Patrick was designed to be a kind of James Bond ruthless killer, except of course James Bond hadn't been seen then. We went on the air six-months to a year before

Interviewed by Stephen Payne
and Jan Vincent-Rudzki

the first Bond movie. So there was no connection. Ian's physical skills were used more and more. He was also a fine actor and the series gradually became very, very popular. They were done live, of course, largely studio with very few exteriors on film. And then Ian be-

'I heard these screams from the other room and then these two black figures rushed by, out the door.' She went into the other room and there was her husband, decapitated, and her two sons killed. Here she was telling it to the news-reel camera! I could not get the image of that



came so popular that he was offered a contract with a film studio and served notice. This posed a hell of a problem, because here we had a marvellous series which was going for the chop. – How to save the idea?

"At that time Kenya was still a British colony and there were some terrible terrorist murders. I remember seeing a newsreel, interview with the wife of a white Kenyan settler. This woman was well built, a belt around her waist with a great revolver in a holster. On her back she carried a baby. She was quite a well-educated lady and was saying,

woman out of my mind.

"So Leonard and I thought, why don't we turn Ian Hendry into a woman based on that woman in Kenya I had seen. I wrote a background piece about her in which she had been an archaeologist in Kenya and had married a settler there. When her husband was killed she returned to England and was working at the British Museum. I was going to team her with Patrick Macnee, with the same moral attitude of Ian Hendry. She would have the same physical dexterity. She could shoot, and was an expert marksman, I had the idea because

of seeing that gun on the plumpish woman's hips. She had no children.

"Patrick finds her in the first episode in the British Museum and involves her in his secret work; the idea of avenging the wronged. He is still an amoral tough guy, charming of course, with his bowler hat and brolly. He is always trying unsuccessfully to lay her which she resents. In fact the whole dynamic of the series was in the friendly enmity, firstly between Ian and Patrick, and this was then carried over with Honour Blackman.

"Then came the problem of casting her. I should mention a very important person, Leonard White, who had been Producer of *The Avengers*. I brought him in to do the series as I had known him in Canada. So, I was going off on holiday and he showed me a short list of performers. That was his job as producer. Anyway, he gave me his list, at the top of which was Honour Blackman. I said I didn't want her. She's a Rank starlet and I can't stand the poor dear's simpering smile all Rank starlets it seemed to me were trained to have. I said I wanted Nyree Dawn Porter. I had used her earlier in an *Armchair Theatre* and I thought she was just right. Being the Boss her name went to the top of the list, and I went off on holiday.

"I came back two weeks later and asked who had been cast. Leonard told me, Honour Blackman. 'Jesus Christ', I said, but Leonard told me that Nyree was not available and out of the others Honour Blackman was the best. I said OK and met Honour Blackman for the first time, and she was a very nice person."

"We started giving her ju-jitsu lessons to follow through on the Ian Hendry strengths and the chemistry between her and Patrick was exciting. She was a beautiful woman, and it was marvellous to take a woman as sexually attractive as that and turn her into a prude.

"We made a pilot and she did her tricks, pretty great. She was a well-trained actress. Then we faced the embarrassment – when she did a backflip or whatever, we could see her underpants. In another case her dress was torn and revealed her brassiere, and it was just too much. Remember we are talking about the morality of the early 1960's. But the worst thing was she played every scene with this little smile. I said she must never smile. I also said that her hair was too short. Put a wig on her until it becomes shoulder length.

"The costume department found a clothes designer who heard that the up-coming fashion was leather, and so we dressed her in leather. She wore skirts that were slit, like a horsewoman's which of course that

SYDNEY NEWMAN





Mrs Gale alias Honour Blackman.
All Avengers photographs © Thames Television.
Patrick Macnee as Steed



and leather then became so kinky the series got notoriety. Here was this beautiful dame, a prude, a ju-jitsu expert, in leather, and she never smiled in the whole series. It was terrific. Patrick was so debonair and charming, a very skilled performer. The two directors I remember best were Don Lever and Peter Hammond.

"After I'd left ABC, Honour, like Ian, was stolen by the movie industry. Her first was the Bond movie *Goldfinger* as Pussy Galore. They cast the lovely Dianna Rigg, and she was terrific, but she did become too twee, I thought, sort of cutesy, but it (the show) developed. Shows have lives of their own. You can conceive the thing one way and the actor will gradually move in another way, and you can't really move that back. That's the amazing thing about making a show, the effect of group mechanics, the way individuals influence one another. What comes up, happily, is the synthesis exciting group especially under a good producer. If you interviewed Leonard White you would meet a man that is so moral you would be astonished that he could have done *The Avengers* with all the sexual innuendos, the violence and all that. Again, it's a question of group mechanics. It's amazing."

Sydney Newman joined the BBC on 12th December 1962, with a five-year contract, as Head of Drama. In view of the impending start of BBC2 and therefore an increase in output of about 40 per cent and a consequential increase in staff he reorganised the department totally. The script department was disbanded, with its head, Donald Wilson, becoming Head of Serials.

With the competition of ITV the BBC became very rating-conscious. On Saturdays the BBC had a head start with afternoon sport. That finished at 5.15. Then at 5.45 there was "*Juke Box Jury*". At meetings of the departmental Heads, Con-

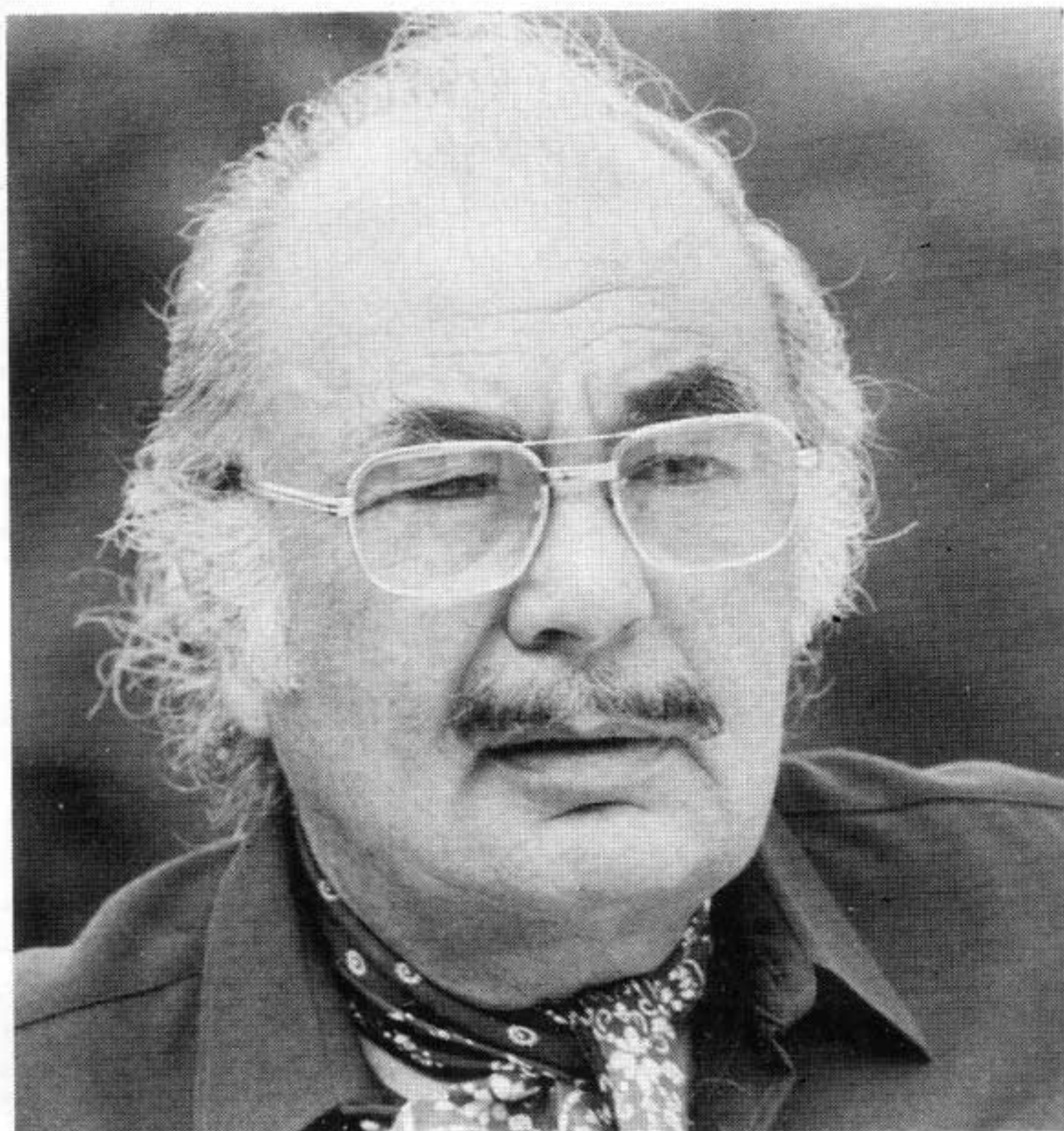
trollers stated that they were not very happy with the drop in audiences between the two programmes caused by a children's classic serial made by the Drama department. So the Controller of the BBC1 asked Sydney Newman if he could do anything to make the dramas more interesting, to hold the interest of the older, sport viewing audience and still be a good children's programme.

"So I thought about it. There were different proposals, none of which I thought would excite and hold the interest of grown-ups.

"I was very much in love with *Outer Space*. I have been a great Science Fiction fan and had of course read H.G. Wells. Always lingering in my mind was his *Time Machine*, so I thought up the idea of this old, old man, over seven-hundred years of age, who was somewhat senile. He had come from a distant planet, which had been invaded by some dreaded *Outer Space* enemy, and had been trying to get back there ever since. But because he was senile he never knew how to work his Time-Space machine. So in the first episode, you may recall, he lands on Earth in a junk yard, with his machine disguised as a Police Box. The rest is history...

"When I had conceived the idea I wrote out a two page memorandum and handed it to Donald Wilson, who said there might be something in it. He was not sure as a lot depends on how you flesh it out. Ideas are a dime a dozen really.

"I looked my staff over and did not feel that any of them had the sense of levity, humour and wit and the seriousness inherent in the shows purpose. Then I remembered one of my Production Assistants from ABC, Verity Lambert. I picked up the 'phone one day, got through to Teddington Studios and asked Verity if she wanted to come over to the BBC and be a Producer. She



said "I sure do" and came dashing over. I handed her the memorandum and asked if she'd like to take a whack at it. She said "Yes, yes, it's great." Then I had the problem of introducing her to Donald Wilson. He was rather sceptical. She had never been a Producer, a Director, or a Scriptwriter, and was very Independent Television oriented. But I had faith in her. She is sharp, tough, charming, very efficient and has a sense of humour. Donald had to accept her, and over the weeks they hit it off beautifully. If I were to give credit for the success of the series I would give myself only 10 per cent for thinking up the idea, and give myself another 40 per cent for hiring Verity Lambert. It was Verity that made the thing of course. She had to be assisted by Donald Wilson who had quite a lot to do with guiding her. My involvement with the setting up was quite light, but I went to the first rehearsals and I read the first scripts. I was involved with the restructuring after the Pilot.

"I wanted the TARDIS to be a common-place object and once you entered you would be inside an enormous space ship.

"The central idea for the programme was quite a serious one although it was important that it be done with wit and fun. I was more interested in the time shift rather than the space shift, which is why so many episodes were set on Earth.

"I knew we were going to inherit a big children's audience so the programme had to have some basic, light educational, content. I wanted the characters, for example, to be on the shores of Britain when Julius Caesar landed, and so bring history alive for today's audiences. By taking contemporary characters and getting them involved in the events of the past made them easily identifiable to give contemporary relevance. The ironic thing is, of course, that as the years went by the ratings of the historical ones did not do so well as the stories of Outer Space.

"The kids loved old Bill Hartnell who in a way was their crochety grandfather. They could identify with the girl, who was closer in age to them, and the dramas were good enough not to bore the adult audiences. So it really became a family-watching programme. That's why it has lasted so long, because it appealed to people at all levels. And in the early days it had enough serious content that in fact it was admired by intellectual types.

"In my memorandum I also determined that no story would last longer than between four and six episodes, and that it always had to end on a cliff-hanger. At the end of the story they get into the TARDIS, press the buttons and still don't know where they are going. The old man is still trying to get home, but he presses the wrong buttons and so of course the story ends with the TARDIS emerging on a new landscape. That was lovely theme music, which again I credit Verity for. She was the one who had the idea



The Doctor, William Hartnell, eyes up the Sensorites. © The Photo Source

of using synthesised music.

"I wanted the Doctor to be larger than life. I think Verity's choice of Bill Hartnell was a splendid one.

"I had not intended Susan to be the Doctor's granddaughter. As far as I was concerned the Doctor was just a senile old man, lost and bewildered, with occasional flashes of extreme brilliance. Susan was simply a schoolgirl that two school-teachers were walking home in the fog.

"I laid down the rule that this series was to be made as accurately as possible without diminishing its entertainment and audience getting value. For example, I said that when you go to Outer Space the conditions on other planets and other places are to be as accurate as contemporary knowledge dictates. Now nobody had walked on the Moon at that time, but scientists had figured out

the gravity and all that stuff so that had to be accurate. If we went to Saturn we did not know what was in the rings so it was alright to use one's imagination. Similarly, if we went back in history it had to be accurate. I was also interested in children getting a sense of space, of relativities of size. I remember in my original memorandum I said that I wanted a story where they return to Earth and are no bigger than ants. In it they would actually go back to the very classroom where the two teachers worked and are nearly stepped on by the kids. I think a variation of that was done about a year later.

"Two of my hatreds are plays about extra-sensory perception and bug-eyed monsters. I'm sure I would not have allowed Susan to have telepathic powers. This brings me on to the story of the Daleks, and

my fight with Verity Lambert.

"I clearly wrote in that memorandum that there were to be no bug-eyed monsters, and then Verity came up with the Daleks. By that time *Doctor Who* was only one of my dozens and dozens of responsibilities at the beeb. Then I saw this damned thing on the air and I 'phoned Verity and demanded her presence on Monday morning. I said 'How dare you? You know I did not want that. That's fake. Bug-eyed monsters are cheap Science Fiction, not what I want'. But Verity is a tough lady. She argued and finally yelled out, 'The Daleks are real. There are brains in those things. They are creatures that were so advanced that their bodies had atrophied. So they had to have the casings to do things for them, to move.' I said, 'Yeah, yeah', but ironically it turned out that that was

what really made the series. It was a fine series, but without the Daleks I don't think it would have been as memorable, and wouldn't be here today.

"Of course you know that in a later episode there was a scene where the lid of a Dalek was knocked off and this great bubbling mass of stuff begins to appear. Everyone was waiting to see what was inside so we closed the set for that episode.

"It was very smart the way the Daleks kept coming back, a sure showmanship idea. When you come across a winner spin it off.

"We used to have Wednesday morning meetings of department heads. Some of them were very worried about children being frightened by the Daleks, that they were too horrific. I said that was nonsense, and Huw Weldon, who was chairing the meeting as Controller of Programmes hooted at the flak and said 'Nonsense, nonsense. I've got a five year old daughter and a three year old son and they put wastepaper bins on their heads and rush around saying "Exterminate, Exterminate".' They all laughed and Huw cooled the situation down."

For Sydney Newman *Doctor Who*



was only one of many programmes. His interest in Science Fiction led to the classic BBC2 series *Out of the Unknown*.

"The trickiest idea is the single play. How do you hold an audience with a series of single plays? Science Fiction is a marvellous genre. Each week the stories were different. Some were slightly amusing, some were funny, some were

horrific. I don't think I objected to bug-eyed monsters there. Irene Shubik, to whom I assigned the series, did a fabulous job. One of her dramas won an international award."

Then *Doctor Who* required attention again. There was a major problem looming – William Hartnell was leaving.

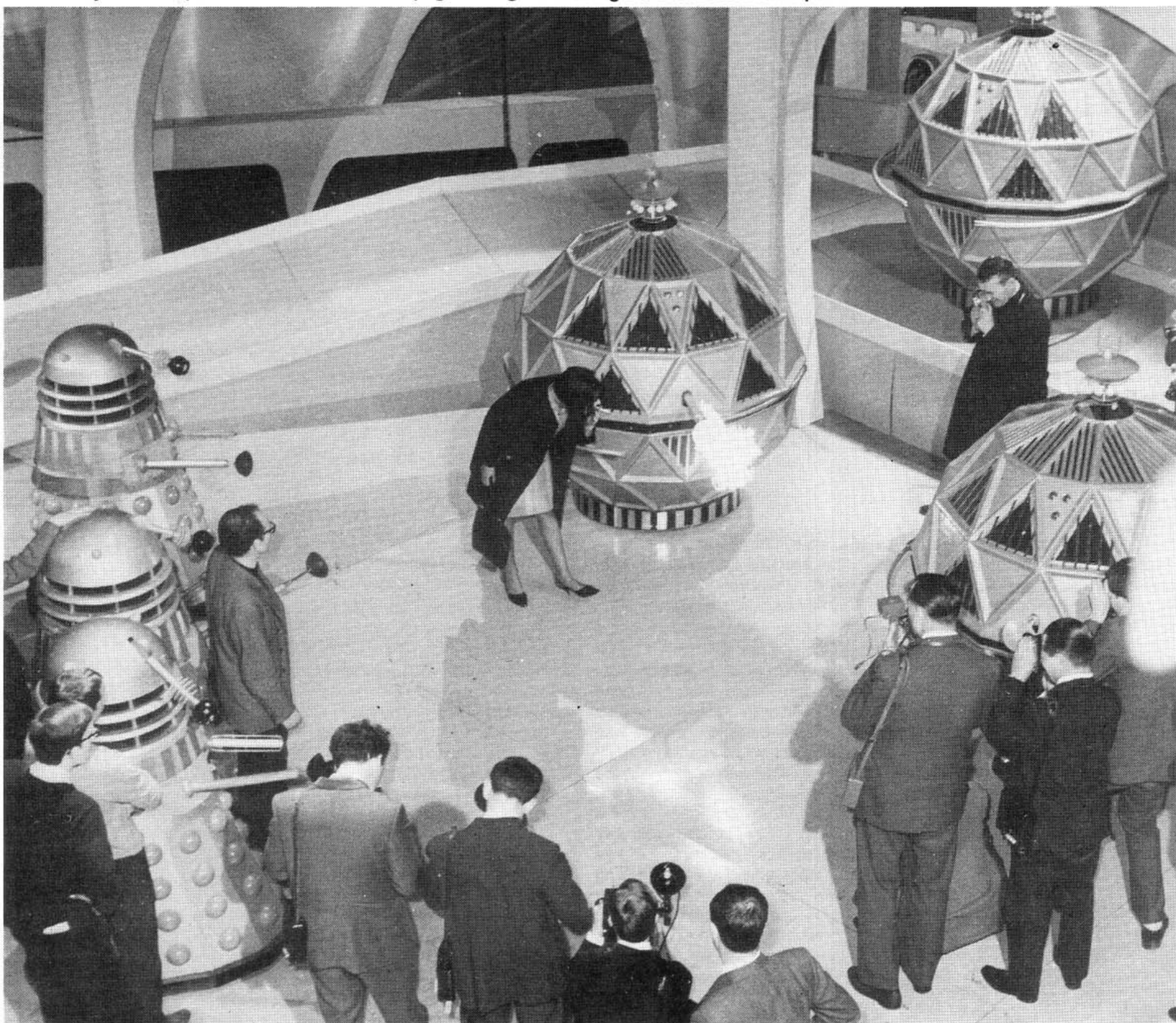
"I reconceived the character as

The Tramp of Outer Space, as a sort of Charlie Chaplin type. He too was old. He was less senile, more intellectually thoughtful, a little more conscious of what he was doing but he was whimsical and fey. In many ways I liked him the most of the many people who played the Doctor. I admired Bill Hartnell but I thought that Patrick Troughton gave it just a little more dimension. My own view on the series now is that I don't particularly care for it. I mean it's alright, it's attractive, it's got caring and people liking one another, so I shouldn't complain.

"Let me say something about the series. It was done before 2001 and before *Star Wars*. In my own view was inspired by the Daleks, and of course they made it cutesy! I always thought there could be a series based on the generation gap, R2D2's in conflict with their parents the Daleks. It certainly was a forerunner and it is amazing that it is still holding audiences in the face of these multi-million pound movies of Outer Space. But in the final analysis, *Doctor Who* is carried by its attractive characters transporting audiences into known and unknown worlds."

© Stephen Payne

Verity Lambert (first *Doctor Who* Producer) lights a cigarette using the Mechanoid's fire-power while Daleks and Press watch on.



© The Photo Source

'INVASION OF THE FLYING DUSTBIN LIDS'

'V' a review
by Andrew Sewell

To counteract the BBC's exclusive coverage of the Olympic Games, the ITV Network broadcast 'V' a ten-hour American Science-fiction soap opera which had recently enjoyed considerable success in the States. Transmitted on five consecutive nights 'V' attracted quite a respectable audience of around 9-10 million, especially good when considering the ungodly hour it was broadcast.

'V' revolves around a race of aliens who arrive on Earth in flying saucers the size of a modern metropolis, somewhat resembling giant dustbin lids. Their appearance is humanoid, and they take great pains to present themselves as peace-loving creatures who wish only for industrial co-operation – the supply of certain chemicals and compounds now exhausted on their home planet. In return they offer to – "Share the fruits of all their knowledge". It later transpires however, that beneath their facade of peaceful intentions they are in fact a reptilian army of occupation, who exist on a diet of live mice and have removable eye-balls (a cure for eyestrain perhaps?). Their true intentions are to drain Earth of its entire surface water and to metabolize the inhabitants in giant cryogenic chambers to be used later as a food supply (Oh uck!).

Having established an interesting premise for a potentially good yarn,

Below: Watch the birdie! Marc Singer as Mike Donovan and Faye Grant as Juliet Parrish pose in front of a Visitors' shuttle. © Warner



Above: Main control room of the mother ship hovering over Los Angeles.

© Warner Bros.

the story unfortunately digresses upon a predictable path, following the exploits of an odd mixture of Americans in their ensuing battle of resistance against the visitors. Led by TV cameraman Mike Donovan, the archetype Boys Own hero, a rather misfit crowd of scientists, business men, TV reporters and just about anyone else you could care to mention drift from one confrontation to another. Not exactly intellectual viewing, but smashing fun for the dormant child inside us all.

As is the case with most American adventure series, strongly drawn characters have a tendency to play

second fiddle to the action. 'V' proved no exception. Both the dialogue and characterisation were extremely crude and undeveloped, embarrassingly so at times. The one strongly drawn and believable character was Abraham Bernstein, portrayed sympathetically by Leonardo Cimino, an elderly immigrant Jew who likens the humans' plight against the visitors as a direct facsimile to his own experiences during the Nazi oppression of the Jews in the 1930s and '40s.

The special effects were the real stars of the show and were really quite spectacular at times – the style of presentation was noticeably influenced by the success of the Star Wars trilogy. Especially good were the flying-saucers hovering over the cities of the world, the perspective was superb and quite realistic. The battle sequences were usually competently executed, in particular the opening confrontation set in El Salvador. There was certainly no skimping on futuristic battles either with skirmishes galore involving lasers and lots of explosions. Whilst on the subject of staged battles, why is it always the villains of the piece who display such an infuriating inability to shoot straight? Well I suppose that's American realism for you.

Apart from the usual soppy romance scenes between our hero and heroine, an intriguing new slant was given to interplanetary relationships and their long-term effects on humanity. Young innocent girl meets young extraterrestrial hunk. The result is one very mixed up baby called Elizabeth who matures at an incredible rate, moults every so often and ends up saving the world!

Although never truly suspenseful

viewing, the pace of direction never flags but somehow the final product doesn't totally gel together. Also unfortunately the overall production values are rather questionable. Nothing is more off-putting than when the boom appears in vision, as happened frequently with 'V'. Not only is this of great irritation to a viewer, but shatters the illusion of fantasy created – Gripe over!

Despite my overall reservations about 'V' it does treat a somewhat familiar theme with some degree of originality. Undoubtedly it is nothing more than pure hokum, but it is never mindless. One TV critic states "I was expecting something truly terrible. Well, it wasn't as bad as all that, though at its worst 'V' is of a banality that makes you shrink back in your chair". A rather more critical view of the series was expressed by another national newspaper who described it as "Looking rather like an apprentice soap opera made in the 1950's for people who thought Superman comics were becoming too sophisticated". Harsh words indeed for a series which never showed any intention of treating its subject with any degree of pretentiousness. 'V' is indeed very reminiscent of such films as *The Invasion of the Bodysnatchers* and the 1960s television series *Invaders* (presently enjoying a re-run on BBC 2), and is basically a re-fashioned version of these. However, it has created some unusual alien lizards with a most extraordinary gourmet appreciation and a ghastly dress sense (someone really should have a word with their tailor) and captivated the imaginations of millions. A series of one-hour episodes are presently in production, and that can't be bad for a series that was described by some as mindless drivel.



ORIGINAL WHO?

Andrew Evans Surveys the 21 years of Doctor Who for Originality

One of the reasons why Doctor Who is the longest running science-fiction serial in the world is due to its originality. While Luke Skywalker and his buddies zoom across the galaxy in their 'supersonic' spaceships the Doctor travels through time and space in his TARDIS, the inside of which is conveniently bigger than the outside and is disguised as a police box. However, after twenty years it must be increasingly difficult for the writers to keep on coming up with different situations for the Doctor to get involved in. Even so, the Doctor's own ability to regenerate is one plot device which enables the programme to take on a new look every few years, and the line up of the Doctor's companions regularly changes. So we never get bored of the central characters. The programme has also had to face expanding markets abroad, particularly in America, on the

one hand but declining ratings at home on the other. How original then is Doctor Who today compared with when it began?

Initially science-fiction based stories alternated with historical stories in which the Doctor would encounter famous figures from the past like *Marco Polo* or arrive at the time of an important event like *the French Revolution*. Appropriately enough in the very first story the Doctor and his unwilling companions were plunged back to the dawn of civilisation where they were captured by a tribe of cavemen who had lost the secret of fire. These stories derived from the original concept of Doctor Who as a children's educational programme, but after the advent of *The Daleks* the stories set in the future and on alien worlds proved the most popular and caught the imagination of the viewers. The last truly historical

story was the *Highlanders* which introduced the longest running companion, although recently there has been a revival of this sort of story but in a two-part format like *Black Orchid* which was a quaint 1920's type whodunnit. The golden rule here was that the Doctor couldn't get very involved and so remained on the sidelines, because whatever had happened in the past he couldn't be seen to change. In fact even if he had tried to warn, say, Robespierre of his imminent assassination Robespierre wouldn't have taken any notice and he would still have been assassinated.

In the futuristic stories, however, there was far greater scope for the Doctor to get involved and actually change the course of events for the better such as thwarting the *Dalek Invasion of Earth*. As far as we're concerned it isn't part of our history. The paradox here though is that it has happened – but in our future and to the Doctor, who is a Time Lord, time is relative. So events in the past and in the future are just points on the total time-scale, as indeed is our subjective viewpoint in the present. This was touched upon in the recent story *Frontios* where the Doctor met survivors from Earth in the future who were at a critical point in establishing a new colony. The Doctor was reluctant to intervene at first because this point was outside the Time Lord's objective sphere of influence but in fact the fate of the colonists should hang no more in the balance than any other point on the total time scale. Therefore, strictly speaking, the arguments against preventing the Dalek invasion of Earth are much the same as preventing the Norman invasion of England. It's just that it's impossible to say whether the Doctor is changing history because we don't know what would otherwise have happened. In fact the programme has to compromise in order to accommodate the relative present of the viewers who are on the whole from the 20th century Earth and not Time Lords from Gallifrey. The Time Lords own policy of non-intervention is one which the Doctor is usually in the habit of breaking. It was for interfering in the affairs of others, albeit on the side of good, that he was eventually put on trial, exiled to Earth and changed into Jon Pertwee. That was when he became attached to UNIT as scientific adviser under the command of Brigadier Lethbridge Stewart and helped to defeat a whole host of invasions from outer space. In fact it seemed that Earth was in danger of a different alien menace every

Doctor number three, Jon Pertwee; weary after a battle with the Daleks? © The Photo Source





The deadly Cybermen rise up from the bowels of the Death Zone on Gallifrey. © BBC Enterprises

other week, but each one was different. Either the monsters were already on Earth like the *Silurians*, or they came here on their own. The Master brought some, like in *Terror of the Autons* or vice-versa like in *The Claws of Axos*. The UNIT stories were also very popular because they brought a new sense of action and adventure to the programme. At the end of *The Three Doctors* however, the Doctor's sentence was lifted and he was free to roam time and space again.

This in turn gave rise to a new situation in which the Time Lords, having revised their policy after the Doctor's powerful mitigation in his defence at his trial, would occasionally use the Doctor to do their dirty work for them. Thus in *Genesis of the Daleks* he was sent back in time to stop the creation of the Daleks, which of course he failed to do because had he succeeded it would have made nonsense of all the other Dalek stories. The Doctor has frequently come across others who have tried to pervert the course of time. There was the *Meddling Monk* who wanted to help King Harold win the Battle of Hastings with atomic bazookas for instance. In the classic *City of Death* the Doctor had to stop Scaroth from preventing himself pressing the button which would destroy his spaceship. The subsequent explosion would provide the vital spark of radiation that gave birth to life on Earth. Presumably it is possible to change history but it would require quite a lot of energy, because you would be substituting, for what we know to have happened, an alternative but parallel timestream like in *Inferno*. In *Pyramids on Mars* Sarah Jane argues that they needn't prevent Sutekh from destroying the Earth in 1910 because

they know that the Earth wasn't destroyed then. The Doctor's response was to show her the alternative time-stream that the Earth would follow should Sutekh's plans be allowed to proceed. That Earth of 1980 was completely devastated.

The first historical story to break the golden rule was *the Myth Makers* in which the Doctor, hailed as Zeus, devised the wooden horse with which the Greeks conquered Troy, but here the Doctor isn't really changing history, he's creating it. Born were the pseudo-historical stories which ingeniously combine elements of science-fiction and history and present a plausible version of events like the Great Fire of London in *The Visitation*. The first story of this genre was *The Time Warrior* which introduced a Sonataran, Linx, stranded on Earth in the Middle Ages and trying to kidnap scientists from the 20th century to help repair his damaged spaceship. There were also stories which explained popular myths like the disappearance of the crew from the 'Marie Celeste', caused by the sudden arrival of the Daleks on board, or the Loch Ness Monster in *Terror of the Zygons* and *Time Lash*. Doctor Who isn't adverse to borrowing from other stories, particularly the Greek legends. *Underworld* was based on Jason and the Argonauts – even the characters names were similar, thus Jason became Jackson, Heracles – Herrick and Persephone the P7E. *The Horns of Nimon* was a humorous reworking of the Minotaur myth, heavily criticised because of its lack of originality, unfair, because it is possible to take the story on two levels. You can appreciate the classic analogies which add a new dimension to the story but they aren't

forced upon you so that you miss out too much if you don't. They show no more lack of originality than the *Brain of Morbius* which owed much to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* or the vampire tale *State of Decay*. On the contrary they show just about any type of story can be adapted to a Doctor Who context. *The Androids of Tara* was really *The Prisoner of Zenda* with androids instead of the real life doubles.

The programme has of course created a rich mythology of its own and many of the monsters and characters have appeared again and again. This gives rise to a continuity which on the one hand lends verisimilitude to the programme and on the other can destroy its credibility when apparent inconsistencies in continuity have to be explained. It's also something which fans get very excited about, but which if over-done can tend to alienate the casual viewers. *The Deadly Assassin* was the first of several recent stories to be set on the Doctor's own planet Gallifrey around which much of the programme's mythology has been built. The sequel *The Invasion of Time* was based so heavily around events in the earlier story that anyone who hadn't seen it would have been totally confused by episode one though it was a brilliant piece of Doctor Who. *The Deadly Assassin* was also a very controversial story at the time because many fans believed it contradicted what had already been established about the Time Lords. However, this view rested on a misconception of their history, their society, and the Doctor's own reasons for rejecting it. A later sequel *Arc of Infinity* fell into the other trap of following too closely in the path of a previous story, because the plot was almost



Doctor Hoo six! Photograph Stephen Payne

identical to that of *The Deadly Assassin*. Similarly the concept behind the first Davison story *Castrovalva* derived exclusively from the theory of block transfer computations which had first been expounded in the story before, *Logopolis*.

Every so often though there is a story which is totally different from the others around it, and so either stands out because it is so unusual, like the Hartnell story *The Celestial Toymaker*, or the Troughton story *The Mind Robber* which was set in the land of fiction, or tends to be forgotten because it is so exotic, like the beautifully surrealistic *Warriors Gate*.

This story was great to watch but was also very confusing and could have benefited from a bit more explanation without distracting from its mystery. Visual imagery is an effective medium but is no substitute for well thought out plots which are chiefly behind the success of Doctor Who. They are also quite intricate and complex, but *Warriors Gate* tried to be too clever for its own good, and this is something else which will only alienate the casual viewer. This story told of how the TARDIS was eventually able to escape from E-Space, but nobody has yet been able to give me a satisfactory explanation of how it was. *Kinda* was a very intriguing story and contained many religious connotations, an unusual source of inspiration for Doctor Who, but suffered from a misplaced emphasis on the cosmetic appearance (which is ironic since the most traditional criticisms of this story is directed at the disappointing realisation of the snake at the end!). It also featured some imaginative and disturbing sequences which took place within Tegan's mind, but all this at the expense of some gaping holes in the plot which spoilt it. More rewarding was the sequel story *Snakedance*, which although it took place later in time explored the origins of the Mara. Because Doctor Who is not afraid to explore new territory it remains original, but to retain its credibility it must also preserve the quality of the plots.

Warriors of the Deep brought back two popular monsters from the Pertwee era, the Silurians and their marine cousins the Sea Devils. This is something the current producer John Nathan-Turner is very keen on – in fact in the 20th anniversary season each story featured someone or something from the Doctor's past. This worked because all the old friends and foes who returned were carefully chosen. The programme must also spawn new creatures and not draw too heavily on its history, otherwise it will grow stale. At first there did not seem much point in bringing back these two monsters, who after all, had had their heyday over 10 years ago. In fact their return was justified by a storyline which was sufficiently different to be original. The setting for the story was fairly conventional though – a seabase under attack from an outside alien force. Unfortunately, it failed to capture the menace of earlier stories of the same genre, like *The Moonbase* and *The Ice Warriors*. The script was let down by some shoddy dialogue and the whole thing was pretty unconvincing. If this had been the first and only appearance of the Silurians and Sea Devils I doubt whether they would have met with the same success. Finally *The Twin Dilemma* was original because it introduced the new Doctor at the end of the season instead of at the beginning. Unfortunately twins Womulus and Wemus were a great let-down. That apart, the story was quite whimsical and refreshing, in many ways reminiscent of an earlier style of story popular when Graham Williams was producer. It didn't work so well because it wasn't suited to John Nathan-Turner's tight restrictive production.

One of the few things it had to recommend it was Colin Baker's Doctor, who on the strength of this over-the-top, hammed, melodramatic, performance, will make an excellent Doctor, full of the eccentricity of former incarnations. In fact he has quite a bit in common in appearance and in his manic outbursts and throw-away lines with his namesake Tom Baker. But a more dominant Doctor than Davison's weaker model is welcome and while Tom Baker is my favourite Doctor I do hope the resemblance ends there and that Colin Baker will find something new to inject into the role. The Grrek playwrights had a theory that there were only seven different types of plot. I wonder if the same is true of characters, in fact I wonder how many different ways there can be of playing the Doctor? We shall have to wait and see! Certainly I have found I accepted Colin Baker as the Doctor more readily than Peter Davison. So while last season ended much as it had begun, disappointingly, with Colin Baker in the title role and Nicola Bryant as his companion Peri, I think the future bodes well.

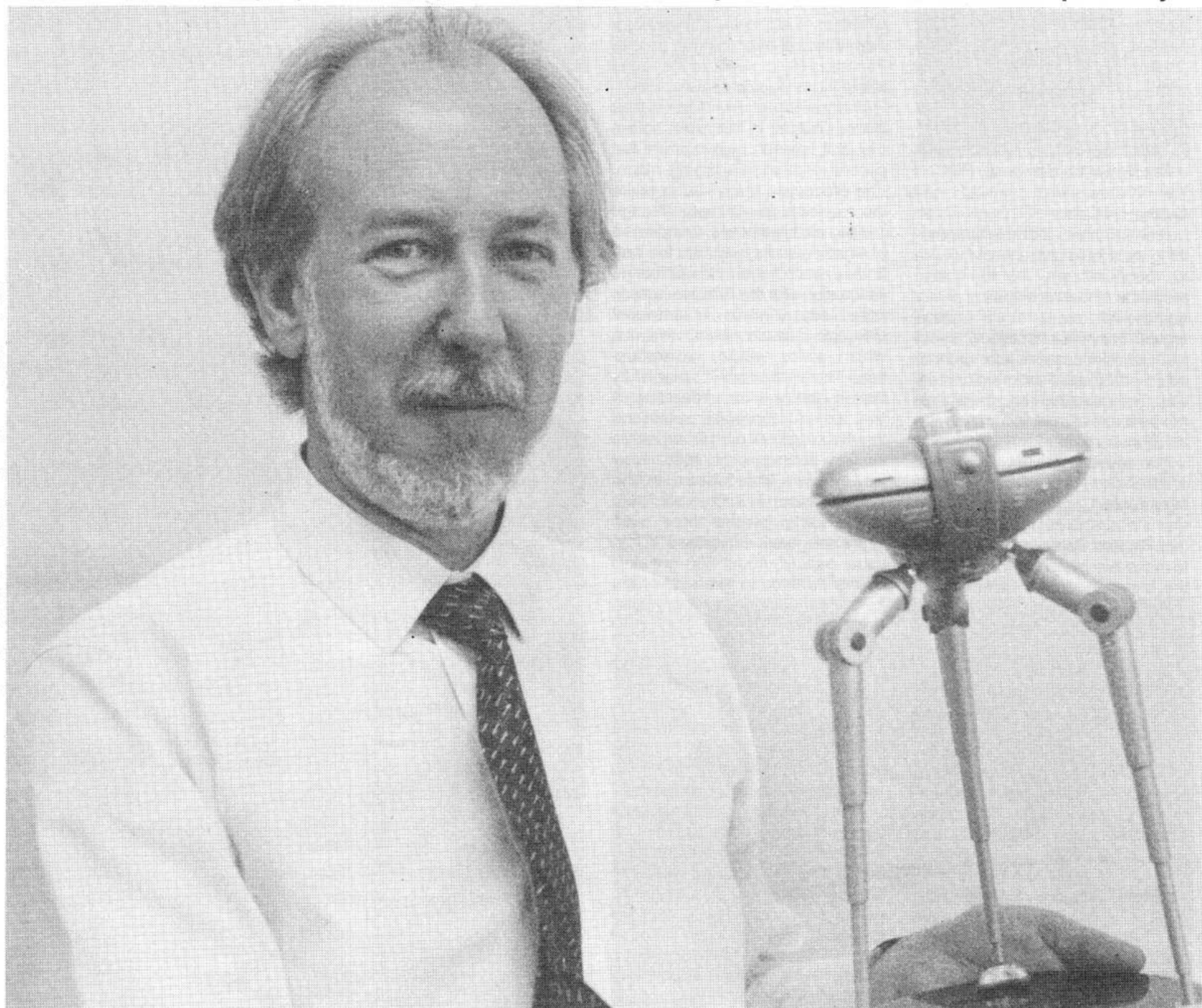
So in theory there is no reason why Doctor Who should ever come to an end or why the writers should run out of ideas, because the format is so flexible it allows the Doctor to arrive at literally any point in time and space. Similarly the character of the Doctor is so unique it's open to an infinite variety of interpretations and I have every reason to believe we shall see the Doctor through all twelve of his allotted regenerations. To be original, however, the programme must not get stuck in a rut or cling too much to its past, but must change directions just as it has done before.

Doctor Hoo four! Photograph by Stephen Payne



A SERIES TO CAP THEM ALL? THE TRIPODS

The man who's brought you 'The Tripods', Richard Bates, by Jan Vincent-Rudzki and Stephen Payne



Richard Bates with a "pet" Tripod. © Stephen Payne

Richard Bates's first encounter with the television industry was as a script writer, but he felt that this was not his forte and was "kicked upstairs", becoming a Script Editor. He worked on the early *Avengers* serials with Honor Blackman, and went on to become Producer of various serious drama plays and serials, all of which were made on video. He had always liked Science Fiction and enjoyed watching 'Doctor Who' with his children. They loved to be frightened. He was particularly interested in the possible effect of aliens on our culture so when someone recommended he read the 'Tripod' books he was hooked immediately.

The original was published 15 years ago and won the 'Guardian' Fiction Prize. At that time there was very little Science Fiction. *Doctor*

Who was the only programme being made, the only other action coming from some cartoon series. You could not find Science Fiction in the Cinema and very little Science Fiction in comics. When Richard first read the books it was quite impossible to find any television company that was interested. Everyone thought of it as duff entertainment. Richard had to wait a long time.

The cycle of interest in Science Fiction re-started with *Star Wars*. George Lucas decided that he would like to make a new kind of epic film for the cinema. At that time, seven years ago, the successful epic films were the Bond movies. With new technology refined and

model work improved, particularly with *2001* (17 or so years old), a Space Epic was possible, and convincing.

Richard knew John Christopher, the author of the books, and was aware that others were trying to get a 'Tripods' series accepted where he had failed. But all those also fell through.

Then he heard that a new Head of Drama at the BBC had been appointed, and that he was a 'Tripods' fan. Richard let him settle in and then suggested that the BBC do the series. It was agreed!

In the meantime Richard worked on setting up 'Tenko'. He had an idea for a vet series, but when

'Tripods' was agreed he made sure he was to be Producer of it and left the vet series to be produced by someone else. He started work on 'The Tripods' two and a half years ago.

His aim was for *The Tripods* to be gripping TV, with tense, but not really violent, moments. It's not Science Fiction about what happens out in Space; that sort, intergalactic warfare, aliens on other planets, is space opera and Doctor Who's territory.

What interested Richard about *The Tripods* was what would happen, and what our reaction would be, on the day waking up and opening the windows we discovered, not that the Russians have arrived, but that a spaceship has landed and aliens are aboard! Indeed it could well happen in our

Richards Bates: Producer



Jim Baker as Henry. © BBC

lifetime, he feels.

Richard thinks that this is something we should give a lot of thought to, because one of the basic problems of man is that he is a very aggressive creature. If aliens arrived we would probably shoot first and ask questions later and that could easily start an interplanetary war. Their landing should certainly not be a question of "shoot first and ask questions later".

The series is very much like *War of the Worlds*, which is not surprising as John Christopher admits that that is where he got the idea from! In fact Richard Bates would quite like to make *War of the Worlds* based on the experience he's gaining from 'The Tripods' when he's finished making the series, in 1988.

The series is set a hundred years in the future when *The Tripods* have already been here for a century. Obviously they have had quite a considerable effect on society and on life generally. The look of the countryside, the way we would conduct ourselves, are all determined by the Tripods. One of the things that John Christopher had done in his books was to create a society that really looks a hundred years back in our past. What would our life be like if we did not have electricity, petrol, cars, or aeroplanes? The Tripods are the answer to that.

In the series people have become accustomed to the presence of the Tripods. They rule mankind by placing a mesh cap on the heads of every child when they reach the age of 16. Through this device they have removed aggression, which may not be a bad thing. The conditioned people believe that the Tripods are good for them. At least they've removed war and disease, hardly the worst that could have resulted from their arrival.

The Tripods do not feature a great deal because the series is really an adventure about three young boys who decide that capping is not for them. Over the next three series, this year, next year and finally 1986, they have to save the world and get rid of the Tripods.

The people believe the Tripods are creatures themselves and this is what the boys believe. In book two they are sent to Germany and there

have to get into the Tripod city. Inside they discover that Tripods are only machines and there are aliens within. Only those people that have been in the city have seen the real aliens and no one ever comes out alive. There are three Tripod cities; one in Europe, one in America and one in the Far East. They are each under a huge glass dome 2 or 3km across – clearly quite substantial. They are also completely self-contained because the aliens have to have their own atmosphere. Added to that everything to do with Tripods is three-sided, so the aliens live in three-sided pyramids.

The making of *The Tripods* was rather unusual in that even before the first season was shown the second was already being made. The production team had to make the decision to go right through making all three series, irrespective of what would happen with the first. If they hadn't there would be no conclusion and the BBC would look rather silly! (This is a somewhat different attitude from America where series vanish mid-production.) The team also knew that if they waited for viewers' reactions a year's production would be lost and they wouldn't be on the air with a second season until 1986. Now viewers can look forward to the second season in September 1985.

The parts for the three main characters were advertised in the usual papers. About 300 hopefuls had to be seen in three days and from them were found two actors. Before finding the last actor they had to enquire around various reps. The boys' ages were actually 16, 17 and 18. The actors needed to be at least 16 years old due to the schooling regulations, and so there could also be a viable shooting schedule, particularly as the three actors are in almost all the scenes.

During shooting a problem came up when one of the actors tore the tendons in his knee. He came back from the hospital with his whole leg bandaged, and was unable to take part in any shooting for at least two to three days. They re-arranged the recording so there could be a stand-in but despite ringing around they could not get anyone to go out to Wales where they were situated. Then the director came to Richard and introduced a young lady, asking who she reminded him of. She looked exactly like the actor. She was working in the kitchen and the director had been very observant to notice her! They told her what was required; just to stand, walk and run around. Would she do it? She said yes. The next day they fitted her with a wig and costume and the similarity became quite amazing. Even now Richard cannot be sure which scenes she is in!

The series was shot nearly entirely on location, during all of last summer after the good weather. They went out the day the weather broke! It was shot all over southern England, taking nearly 14 weeks. For one episode they used a big castle in Folkestone, Kent, where they built a stand and had jousting



Henry (Jim Baker) about to be ground to pulp by a Tripod's foot? © BBC Enterprises

and a real sword fight as an event. The whole ceremony is observed by a Tripod so at the far end of the field they placed three Tripod legs.

After the locations there was some work in the studio and then

the first six months of this year were spent putting the 13 half-hour programmes together.

Richard is 95 per cent pleased with the result. There are some parts that still don't convince him, as

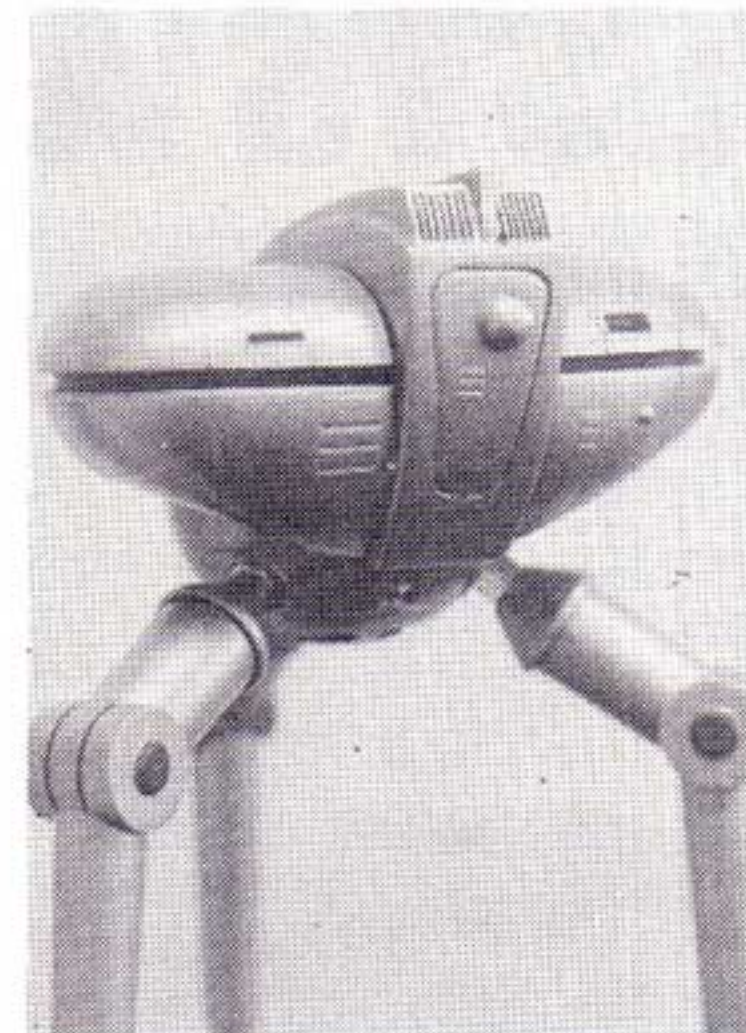
on video. In an ideal world the series would have been made on film, using all the advanced film technique seen in the cinema. The real problem was that there was not the money. A film camera costs about £3,000, while the broadcast standard video camera costs £30,000 and the video recorder that you need costs £60,000. The BBC have 80 video recorders, so that's an investment of 4.5 million in recorders alone. There's really no question in buying more equipment when so much has already been spent, and so video is the ideal medium for the series. Film techniques have been with us a long time, and the cinema has built up a lot of skills, which the TV industry, a video medium, is only now beginning to have the equipment to copy. Even now the television industry is only catching up to where the film industry was in the 1930s. There are a lot of techniques that the film industry can achieve which television cannot, but 'The Tripods' has helped to make that gap smaller.

Models play a very important role in the series. A Tripod is supposed to be about 80ft high, and it would be impossible to build and operate something so big. The production team have one model which stands about 12ft high and two other models about 3ft high. These have radio-controlled heads so that the heads are capable of turning, moving up and down and have lights flashing inside. These are rather expensive toys!

The Tripod city will need to be seen in series two so they are building an enormous model of it, which covers an area of 30 by 40ft. Each building needs to be about 7ft high for if you wanted to go close to anything with a camera you'd have to have the detail there. Shooting in the model city will start early next year.

Although the complete Tripods were just models, parts had to be made full size, thus making interactions with the actors easier. The first 30ft, feet and legs were built. These were what were seen walking into the pond in episode one. There was also an added advantage to the three legs in the pond, they had reflections in the water. This gave much more credence to the final scene. In the last complete shot the model was superimposed, ensuring that the lighting and colour of the Tripod is perfect. Just doing that one shot took four hours to line up. On special effects work they were shooting only about 30 seconds a day.

One thing that gave them about a year of headaches was how a three-legged object would walk. Everybody said it was impossible, nothing on three legs can walk. Richard's answer to that was a Tripod would say to you that nothing on two legs can walk, which we have perfected reasonably well! Richard is not sure that they have succeeded but it does walk, which will be seen in later episodes. One way of getting round the problem was showing close-up and going



A small display model Tripod.

© Stephen Payne

overhead so that you never actually see the sequence of feet on the ground. When episode one was made they chickened out showing a Tripod walking but they knew they would have to solve the problems by the time they reached episode two or three.

They also realised that, whether they liked it or not, they had to have an armed Tripod. So in the end, episode 13, the boys find themselves fighting laser-shooting red Tripods, which come out determined to get them. Quite a lot of changes have been made from the books. Unfortunately the books are not

enough for the magic figure of 13 for the series so extra scenes had to be added, with the agreement of John Christopher.

The title sequence was generated entirely by computer. That meant the x and y co-ordinates for every single frame, that's 25 frames a second, had to be dialled into the computer. As the titles last 42 seconds it took a year to make and the printout was understandably very thick. The problem was that having got it into a computer how could it be displayed? In the end they had to take it out of the computer frame by frame and put it on to 35mm film.

All the music was done with a computer-aided synthesiser, and all by one man on a 16-track recorder; Ken Freeman. There were no real instruments. Richard had seen a commercial Ken had composed which he was very impressed with. This is really a very cheap form of music, with one man on a machine. Ken is capable of reproducing sound that would otherwise need a complete orchestra. He is not from the Radiophonic Workshop, but the equipment used is similar.

Finally, Richard found it quite thought-provoking that it will be possible to watch the entire series between breakfast and teatime when it took two and a half years to make! It also gives a good idea of the scale of the television industry.

John Shackey as Will. © BBC



WHO GUESTS AT THE TOWN AND COUNTRY FESTIVAL



The Town and Country Festival is an event that takes place every year at the Royal Showground, Stoneleigh, Kenilworth. Previous years have seen appearances of Jon Pertwee as "Worzel Gummidge". For the August of 1984 the organisers wanted a change and opted, with Jon Pertwee in mind, for a *Doctor Who* theme. As well as Jon Pertwee there was the most recent "Doctor", Colin Baker, Elizabeth Sladen – Sarah, Janet Fielding – Tegan, and the current producer, John Nathan-Turner. Also in evidence was the "Whomobile".

The evil meglomaniac, Babros.



All photographs © Stephen Payne

BLAKE'S SEVEN IN AMERICA

Scorpio II, held 10-12 August at the Hyatt Regency Oak Brook near Chicago was the first real Blake's Seven convention held in the United States. It was organised by Scorpio, a Chicago-based Blake's Seven fan club which is run by Cherry Steffy and Nancy Kohlen.

One might ask, what of Scorpio I if II is the first? Last year at the same time Scorpio organised a two day party at a members house. It included food, fanzines and endless videos. There were no guests and attendees slept wherever there was space. This they called Scorpio I which could technically be called the first con; but Scorpio II is definitely the first polished, totally planned event.

The guests for the 3 days were Terry Nation, Paul Darrow, Michael Keating and Brian Croucher. Attendance was around 180 and everyone (organisers, fans and guests) agreed that the low number made for a more intimate and better controlled convention.

An odd thing about these events

The latest export from Britain Reporter: Larry Wauchop

is that they're based around a series that has never been broadcast in the States, though according to Terry Nation all legal hassles should be over by September at which time transmission can then begin. Organiser Cherry Steffy even commented on how strange it was to be holding a convention for a television series not currently being seen anywhere in the world! This is probably a first. How did the series gain the following it has then? Through "borrowed" tapes, as Mr. Nation phrased it; and both he and the actors seemed quite pleased that the show has come over at all.

Activities for the weekend included fan panels on Doctor Who, The Professionals and Sapphire and Steel; a dealers room; guest panels and autograph sessions; two swimming pools; a masquerade; an art

room; lots of videos; and a charity auction. There was more than enough for everyone and everyone could see everything if they so desired.

All the panels were quite entertaining; the guests were open, interesting and funny. In fact Brian, Paul and Michael were continually ribbing each other throughout the weekend which created a very jovial and personal atmosphere for all.

It was acknowledged many times during the convention that none of us would even be there without the creativity of Terry Nation who was happily anticipating the second life his creation would soon be having.

Many questions were naturally asked of Mr. Nation regarding the character and creation of Blake's Seven and the following is a sample of some of those questions.

Q. Why was the ending of each series a cliffhanger?

A. Because we were never sure if there would be a next season so we had to do something to keep the show on the minds of the public during the long breaks between the series. Each series ended with a bang but not one that we hadn't already thought of a way out of if we needed to.

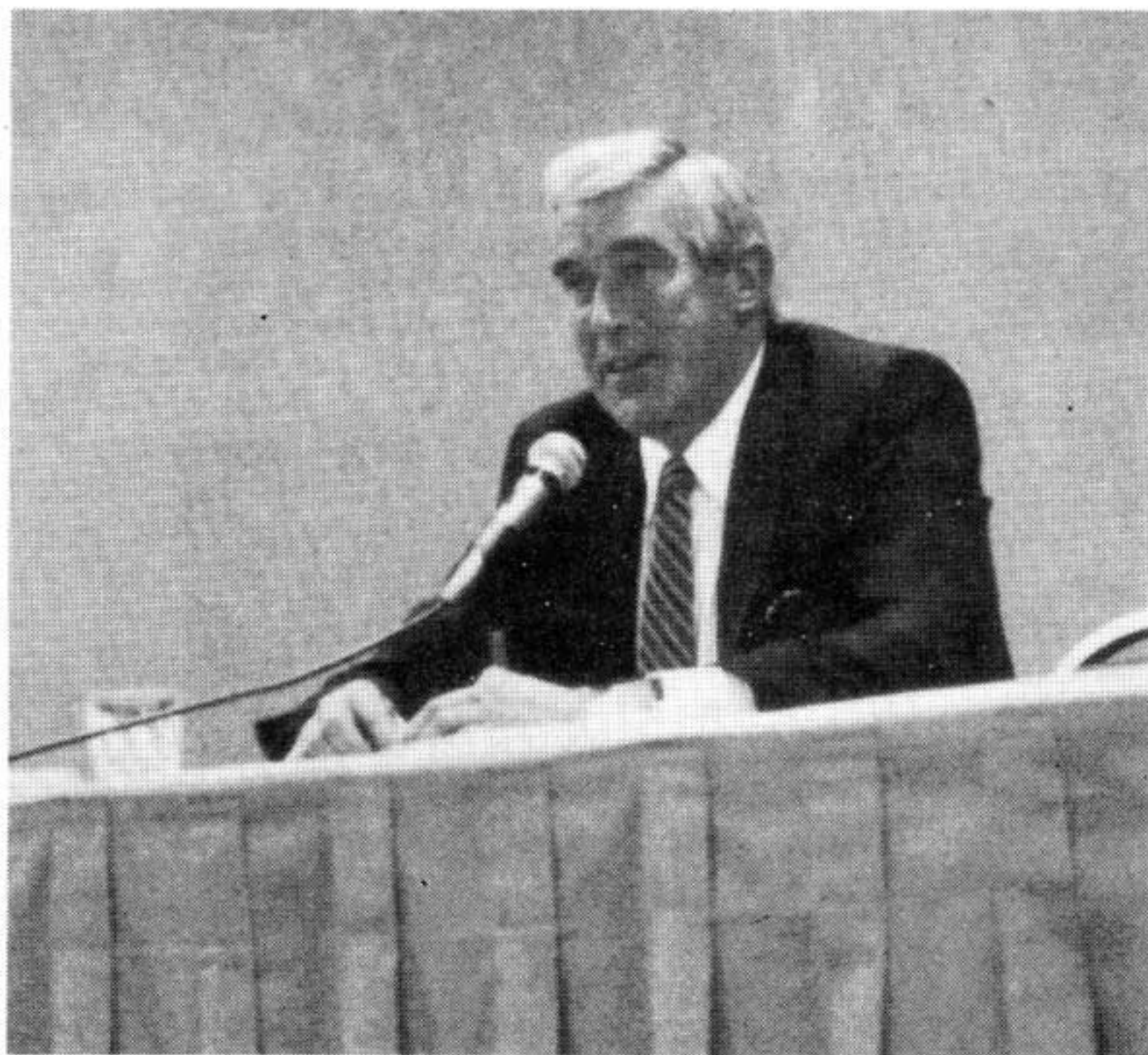
Q. What do you think is the reason behind the popularity of the series?

A. Blake's Seven is about people, not people in the 30th Century, and not people in a spaceship, but just people from anytime and their relationships, their problems and how they deal with them. Real people situations that any of us could face. The people were different in this series, they were real. Their humanity is what made the series different.

Q. Was the rumour that the Daleks were to be featured in Blake's Seven ever true?

Paul Darrow counts his losses on a reckless game of Ludo. Photograph courtesy Larry Wauchop





Terry Nation. Photograph courtesy Larry Wauchop

A. No, the Daleks were never seriously considered to be in the show. I might have mentioned to someone once, "wouldn't it be interesting if ...", but there were never any real plans to have them in it. They would've made the end of the last series more interesting if they were in it though!

Q. Did you write, have anything to do with, or approve of the end to series four.

A. No to all of it. I didn't approve of the ending because I thought it was a bad way to end it all, too quick. I would not have ended it that way.

Q. Did you enjoy writing for a children's show (Doctor Who) and is Sci-fi your favourite type of story to write?

A. I never wrote for kids, I wrote for people. I never liked the term children's show because kids know if you're writing or talking down to them and they find that degrading. As for writing, I have written in all fields and I like to think I can do whatever type is asked of me. I used to be a comedy writer. I like sci-fi because then I'm God. Some writers research very deeply to make their stories real and seem right, but if it's my planet or universe then I create the conditions I want, I need no research. It's fun playing God sometimes!

Q. Was the series in danger of cancellation after Blake left?

A. No. Some people came to me and said, "Well I guess that's it, your lead actor is gone", but I found the idea of doing Blake's Seven without the man it was named after a great challenge. I loved the idea.

Q. How would the series have gone if Gareth Thomas had not left?

A. I... I don't really know! It would have been quite different I know, but I think it worked very well as it is. I quite liked the third series. The theme wouldn't have been the same at all.

The largest attended event was the masquerade/art and charity

auction on Saturday night. Being a small convention there weren't too many costumes or art pieces but there were some good ones. The biggest winners for the costume contest were a Servalan whose hand BC and PD were anxious to bow and kiss; a girl in a black cat costume who announced she was K-9 after a trip to Sweden and a species change; her name was K-at! And a parody group called Flabe's 7 that was quickly reduced to Avons 1.

The charity auction (for Shriners children's hospital) brought an unusual array of items and some rather high prices. Avon's belt modelled by Paul Darrow received \$425, two pilot scripts to Terry Nation's never filmed Daleks TV show went for \$425, and a private breakfast with each of the stars went for \$110 - Terry Nation, \$140 - Brian Croucher, \$150 Michael Keating, and an astonished Paul Darrow brought \$580! The guests were stunned as was most of the audience, but since he is considered a sex symbol and the attendees were three-quarters women it really should be no surprise.

The auction got somewhat informal as audience members started bidding on personal items of the stars that weren't up for auction and then getting them! Items that went were Paul's matching handkerchief and tie (the bidder wanted to remove it herself!), Brian's sunglasses (complete with sizzling kiss); Terry Nation's tie; and Michael's carry bag (complete with pen). It was a very entertaining evening.

In the end I would say that the guests were very friendly and enjoyable, quite accessible to their fans; the convention was well organised and smooth running; and the hotel and programming were excellent. Overall a great convention, and much praise should go to the organisers for such an event. But as Terry Nation commented "Once Blake's Seven hits America he is looking towards conventions even bigger and better".

ROUND-UP

"V"

The new series of "V" began transmission in America on 26th October, although British viewers will have rather longer to wait, as Granada television have no firm dates for transmission. Set one year on, the series re-unites many of the original cast. It has been produced under a smaller budget than before and has therefore resulted in some necessary corner cutting. One such measure has been to replace the existing guns, which required complicated laser effects, with a rather more cost-effective version.

Star Trek IV

The fourth "Star Trek" movie is reported to be titled *As The Starfleet Turns*. Does this mean that *Star Trek* will be turning into *Kirk's Seven*?



Doctor Who

Details of *Doctor Who*'s 1985 season are as follows.

Attack of the Cybermen by Paula Moore, directed by Matthew Robinson.

Vengeance on Varos by Philip Martin, directed by Ron Jones.

The Mark of the Rani by Pip and Jane Baker, directed by Sarah Hellings.

The Two Doctors by Robert Holmes, directed by Peter Moffatt.

Time Lash by Glen McCoy, directed by Pennant Roberts.

Revelation of the Daleks by Eric Saward, directed by Graeme Harper.

These are listed in transmission order but are subject to alteration.

To appear in this year's season are: Jacqueline Pearce, known best for her role as Servalan, Patrick Troughton and Frazer Hines, recreating their roles of the Doctor and Jamie, and Anthony Ainley making a welcome return as the Master, joined this time by a fellow Timelord, the Rani, played by Kate O'Mara.

Hitch-Hikers

It is understood that Douglas Adams has agreed to plans for a new feature film based on the *Hitch-Hikers* radio series, although the main roles will be played by American actors.

Tripods

Charlotte Long who plays Eloise was tragically killed in a car crash. She was to have reappeared in Series Two and the production office are considering what to do.

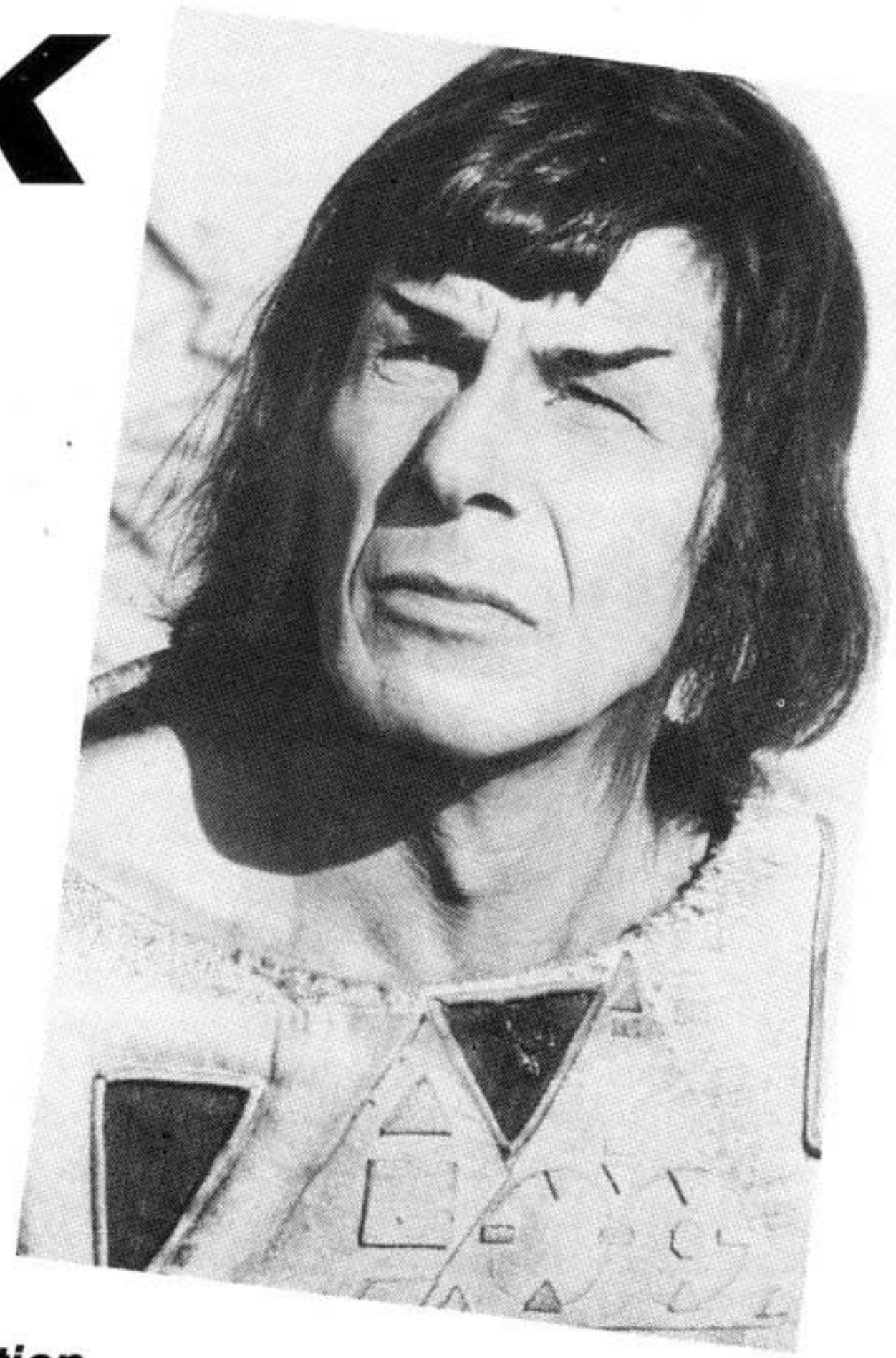
Terence Dicks

The former writer and script editor of *Doctor Who*, Terence Dicks, will replace the current Producer of the Classic Serials, Barry Letts, at the beginning of 1985. Terence is currently script editor for the classics which have included *The Invisible Man* and *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Future plans include Barry Letts to direct *Alice in Wonderland* which was previously postponed due to a BBC strike.

Jacqueline Pearce at "Star One" Convention, 1980. © Paul Holroyd



THE SEARCH FOR... STAR TREK



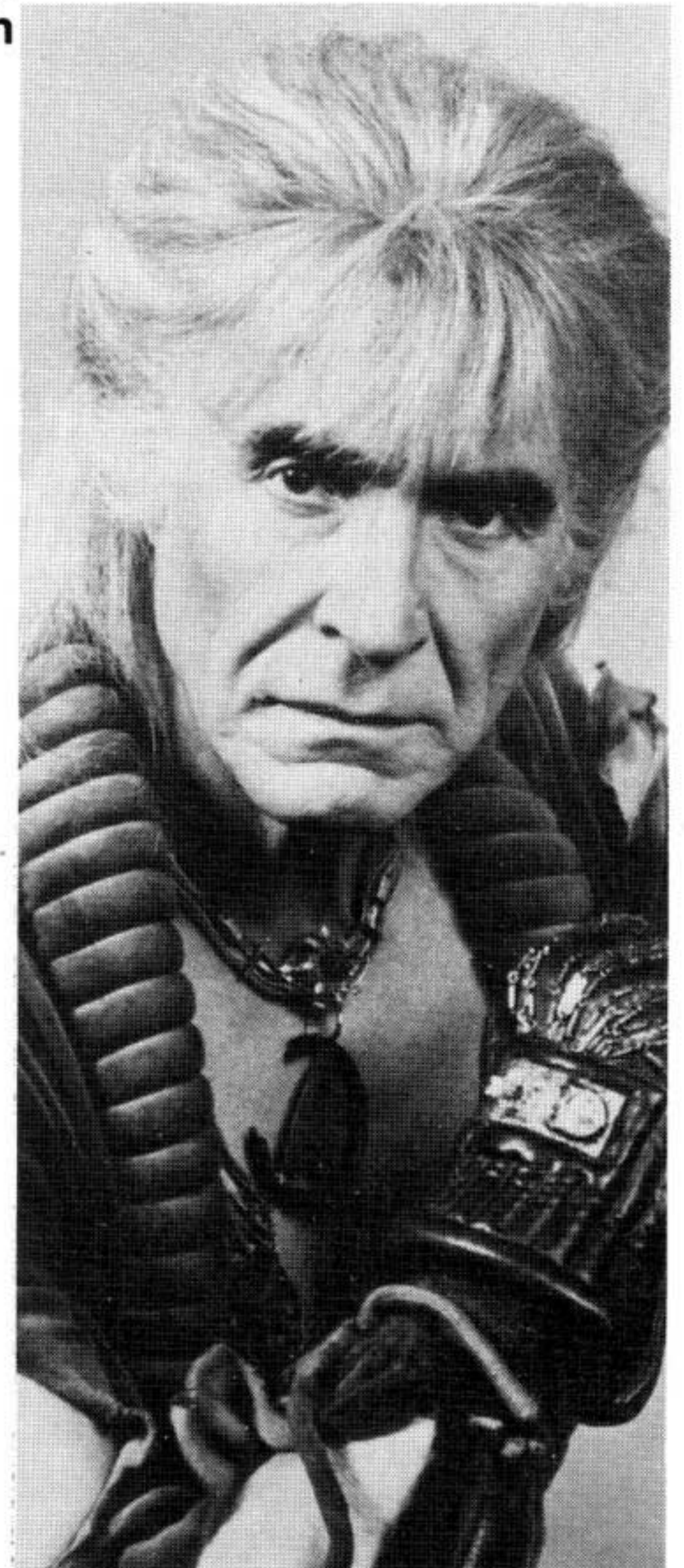
John Ainsworth surveys the three Star Trek films, *The Motion Picture*, *The Wrath of Khan* and *The Search for Spock*. Which has come nearest to the original "Star Trek" concept?

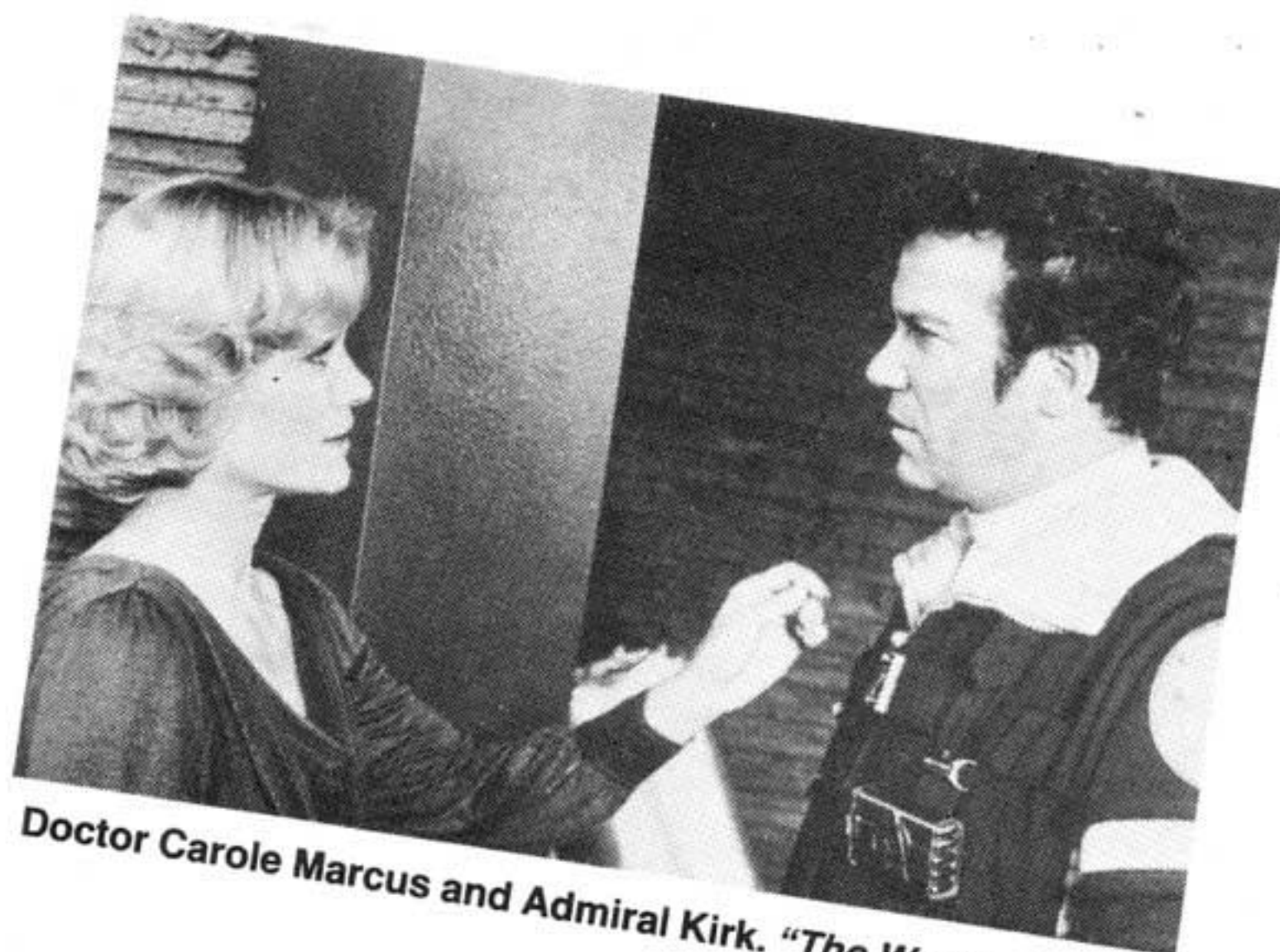
Doctor Who as almost everybody knows holds the title of the longest-running Science Fiction series in the world, now in its twenty-first year. But it is perhaps even more remarkable that *Star Trek*, a show that was cancelled in 1969, survived a gap of ten years' absence and returned in the form of *Star Trek – The Motion Picture*. Over this span of time *Star Trek*'s fan following never waned, if anything it increased, helped by the constant reshooting of the seventy-nine episodes and also a rather basic children's cartoon series.

At the time *Star Trek – The Motion Picture* was well received. However, someone who had waited ten years would probably have welcomed anything that was "new Trek" whatever its form. Looking back on "The Motion Picture" now it is a good, well-made, film but it simply does not have the *Star Trek* feel to it. The entire original cast appears with the exception of the three main leads, Kirk, Spock and McCoy, they are ignored to such an extent as to be almost cameo appearances. The majority of the film is taken up by the admittedly spectacular special effects, interchanged between the three principal leads and development of the new characters of Ilia and Decker. The story was interesting, though a little drawn-out in places,

and the revelation that Vejur was in fact the Voyager II space probe was a good solution to the mystery of the cloud-being. However, human and machine uniting to make a new life-form was a somewhat dubious conclusion. Continuity was generally good, showing a natural advancement in technology but keeping much within the styles set by the series. The only hiccup in this department was the rather drastic change of the Klingons physiognomy. The film seemed to have been made with the thought that because it was a big money, big screen, production, the plot had to be equally big and monumental. This is where it failed. The majority of the stories on television had featured comparatively inconsequential events that had affected only one ship and its crew and depicting their fight for survival. This was exactly the formula needed, and this was exactly what we received in the form of *Star Trek II – The Wrath of Khan*.

The Wrath of Khan is undoubtedly the best of the *Star Trek* films. It had everything the first film lacked; a strong, constantly moving plot, involvement of all main characters and, not least of all, a good, melodramatic villain – Khan Noonan Singh, powerfully portrayed by Ricardo Montalban. The story was not at all ambitious and could quite easily have





Doctor Carole Marcus and Admiral Kirk. "The Wrath of Khan"



Kirk and his son, David Marcus. "The Wrath of Khan"

All Star Trek photographs © Paramount Pictures

Spock partakes in the ancient ceremony of Kolinahr. "The Motion Picture"

hailed from the series itself, particularly with Khan having appeared previously in the episode *Space Seed*.

As well as Khan, the subsidiary characters were all well portrayed, my personal favourite being Doctor Carole Marcus, one-time lover of Kirk and mother of his child, David. It is interesting to note that in the episode *Where No Man Has Gone Before* Kirk mentions that he once nearly married a young medical student – could this have been Carole?

As we first join the "Enterprise" we find it once more, as in the first film, in space dock. It is almost as if Paramount have tried to forget the *Motion Picture* and start again; indeed, even the uniforms have changed again. But this time they have got it right; as the doors to the bridge slide open that true family feeling that only *Star Trek* has, floods over the audience.

The most impressive sequences in the film are the battles between the "Enterprise" and Khan's "borrowed" ship, the "Reliant". These are further enhanced by James Horner's striking musical score.

The finale of Spock's death and following scenes are tastefully handled and make a good tantalising end to a wonderful film. Humour was a contributing factor to the success of this film but it had been well-controlled and not let become overt. Unfortunately this was a fate that befell the third and, to date, last film: *Star Trek III – The Search for Spock*.

Unlike the *Motion Picture*, "Wrath of Khan" had an almost cliff-hanger ending leaving the questions, "Will Spock return?" and "If so, how?", hanging in the air. This led, not surprisingly, to the sequel being looked forward to with even more eagerness than the previous films. No one was really in any doubt that Spock would be resurrected, to have backed out on this point would have

been too much of an anti-climax and would have caused a huge outcry from the disappointed fans. However, the question of 'how' still remained. It would have been nice if Kirk and friends had, after a brief skirmish with a handful of Klingons, recovered Spock's body, waved a magic wand and brought him back to life, followed by a tea and buns ending, flying off into the sunset at warp six for further adventures. Unfortunately it was not to be that simple. Leonard Nimmo had firm feelings on this. If someone was to be resurrected from the grave with credibility it should not be seen to be an easy task; and easy it certainly was not.

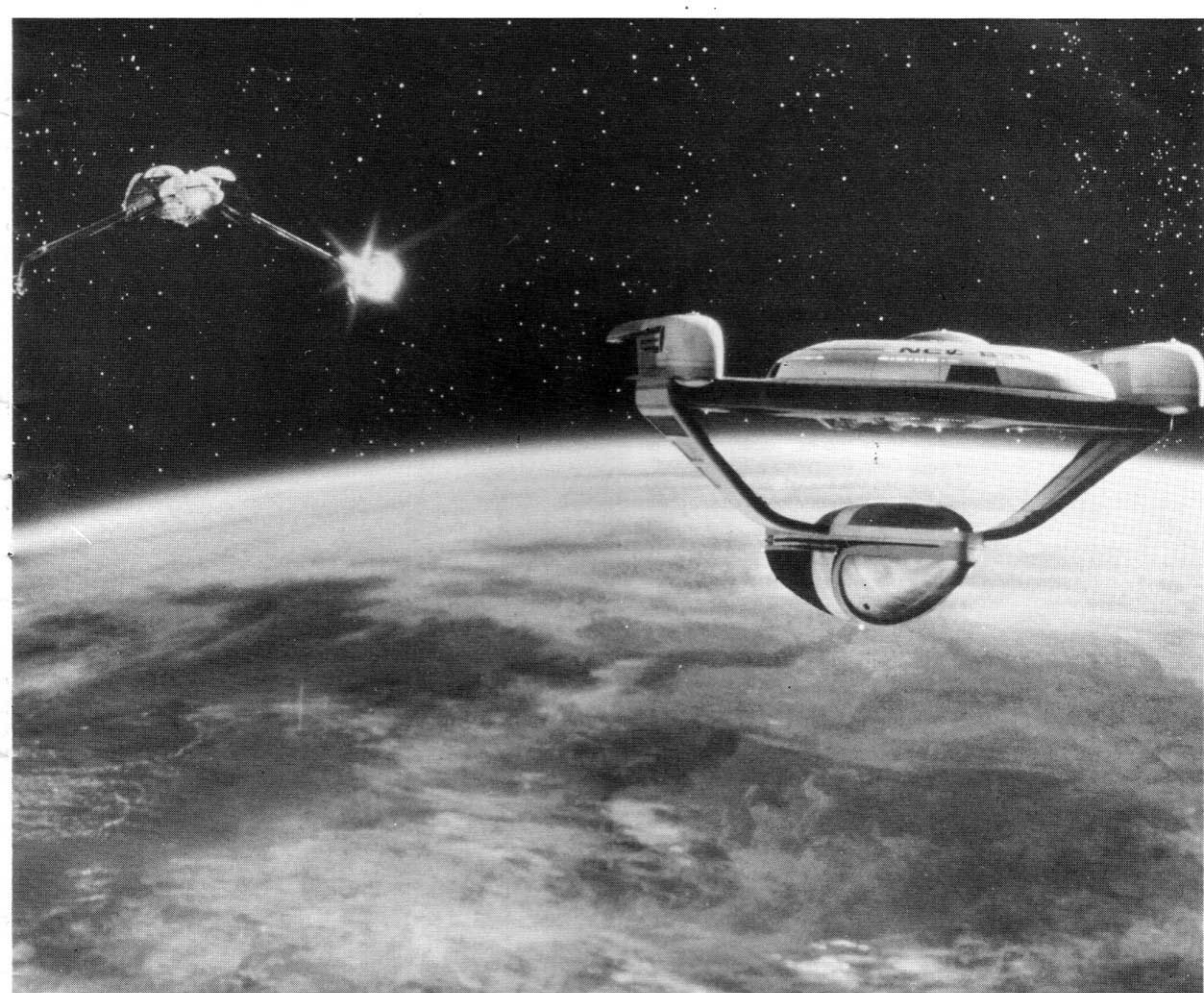
In the short space of time between the opening and closing title of *The Search for Spock* the whole of *Star Trek* is turned upside down and changed forever. The death of any of the main characters would be sad but forgivable because "These are the Voyages of the Starship Enterprise" whoever her crew maybe.

However, the "Enterprise" will be setting sail no more, as *The Search for Spock* was to be her last swan-song. As the "Enterprise" met her end, *Star Trek* too (for me at least) came to a sad end.

As a film in its own right it was not very impressive. The most disappointing aspect being the Klingons, they were dreadful – from those papier-maché foreheads to their stupid flippancy. These bumbling fools were far removed from the cunning villains of old. The other big offender was the humour, which was far too overt and over-used. An example of this at its worst being where the huge Starship *Excelsior* splutters to a stop with the sound effect of a broken-down old car.

Of course, the film ends with the revival of Spock on Vulcan, but where do we go from here? The "Enterprise" destroyed, her crew outlawed by the Federation. But the fourth film is on its way, the cast are waiting and "The human adventure is only beginning".





The Klingdon Bird of Prey attacks the unsuspecting USS Grissom. Photograph: Industrial Light and Magic
Khan, *"The Wrath of Khan"*

Michelle Nichols as Uhura from *"The Search for Spock"*



APPRECIATING WHO

The guests at AggieCon
Reporter: Stephen Payne

The first *Doctor Who* convention took place back in 1977. Its site was a small church hall in Battersea and was organised by a two-year-old group calling themselves the "*Doctor Who Appreciation Society*" – DWAS. Seven years on, with vast *Doctor Who* conventions having taken place both in this country and the USA, we find ourselves back in a church hall for this *Doctor Who* event. This time, organised by a local group of DWAS led by a very flamboyant 16-year-old named Alec Charles. Pennett Roberts – director, and actors Chris Tranchell and Richard Franklin were the guests of this *Doctor Who* event which took place on 21st July 1984.

Two hundred fans were in attendance to listen to the interviews and panel discussion, view a play, buy fanzines and meet other fans. It was a reasonably well organised and enjoyable day in which all the guests had something interesting to say.

Pennant Roberts was the first to be interviewed. Pennant has long been connected with Science Fiction direction. He has worked on *Doomwatch*, an early Seventies drama series with a message telling us to beware of scientific developments. More recently he has directed *Blake's 7* and of course *Doctor Who*. The similarity between *Blake's 7* and *Doctor Who* was commented upon, but Pennant felt that this was more the house style of the BBC than any real similarity. "*Blake's 7*", he said, "was a series primarily about conflict" and added that it was "murder to work on", especially the first series. He ex-

plained that *Blake's 7* was a replacement for the gap left by *Softly, Softly* – a police drama series, and it had to make do with the budget and studio time that was intended for that. This had meant limited sets, they could only afford half a Liberator control room set, and insufficient time for the special effects.

Doctor Who, though, was the main topic of the interview. Pennant Roberts has worked on four Tom Baker stories, namely "*Face of Evil*", "*Sunmakers*", "*Pirate Planet*", plus the ill-fated "*Shada*" and also one Peter Davison, "*Warriors of the Deep*".

With Pennant having worked with Tom Baker over quite a period he was asked what he felt about Tom's character coming through in the Doctor. He told the audience that Tom was very imaginative and he wanted to use that. "It is good for an actor to put in such a high input" but went on to say that with *Doctor Who* changes were limited because of the need for preparation of sets and special effects. However, he could not tell Tom do this and that but had to let him explore any ideas he had and then say whether it worked or not.

The problems with the incomplete story "*Shada*" were very much of interest. Both the film work and first Studio session had been completed but on the second of three studio sessions they worked from 11 am to 1 pm and "then the dispute hit us" said Pennant. The industrial dispute finished the day before they were next due in the Studio for the third time but this was too little notice to



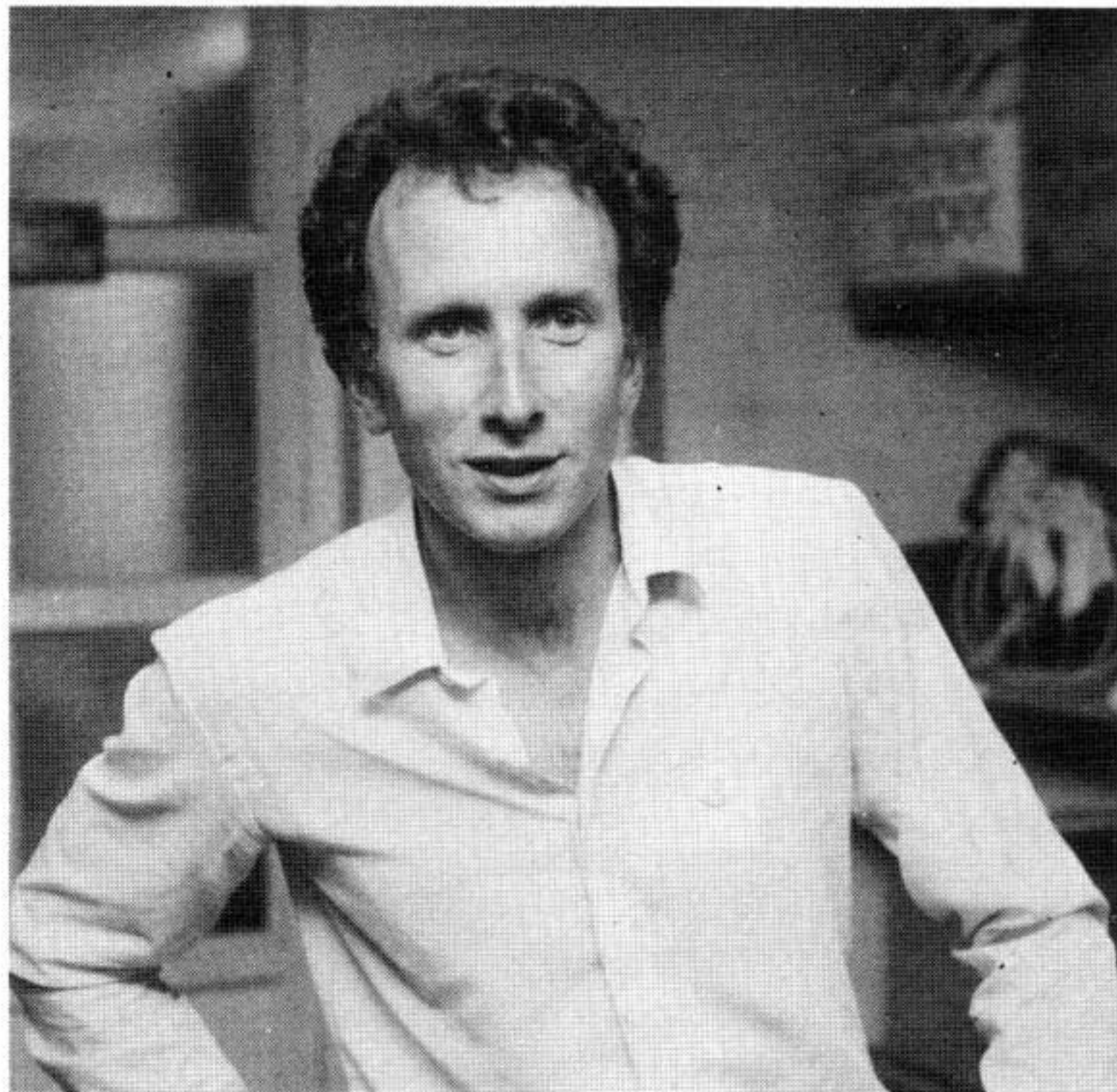
Pennant Roberts. © Stephen Payne

get the sets into the studios. The sessions would have been relatively easy to remount as most of the cast had been finished with on the first session and only a few main characters would have been required for the re-booking. However, because a "*Morecambe and Wise*" and other Christmas shows had also been lost they took priority over *Doctor Who* for studio space. Pennant had even discussed reducing this six-part story to four but this did not help as it would have meant cutting large amounts of footage from that that was already shot and therefore leave almost as much to be recorded. January would have been the earliest time for remounting but because producer Graham Williams was leaving and John Nathan-Turner taking over the decision was made not to continue and give the new producer a completely fresh start.

Pennant Roberts most recent *Doctor Who* was "*Warriors of the Deep*" and this was not his favourite. He told how it was complicated from a physical point of view although a relatively simple story line. There were three monsters, "a heavy-weight, a middle-weight and light-weight". All of these were combined with a sea base and the Doctor to form four episodes, which would have originally lasted forty minutes instead of the required twenty-five! This meant a rewrite to trim what could be lost but this was found to be difficult and Pennant was not en-

tirely happy. At the time of recording there was a General Election so the first studio session had to be a week earlier causing two problems. One was the large "heavy-weight monster". It was intended to be available a week before the first studio date to allow the actors time to get use to the costume and iron out any problems. However, with the date being moved forward this meant that no time was available, and they just had to do the best they could. Although they were used to being a pantomime horse, design problems like a sagging back just had to be coped with as best as they could. The other difficulty caused by the earlier studio session revolved around the filming that is normally done before the main studio sessions. The filming was to be slotted in between the two studios but if film was used it would not have been ready in time, the only solution was to use portable video. Because of restrictions on the use of video at BBC Ealing Film studios they used Shepperton Studios which had a tank four times the size of the BBC one. In the end Pennant felt that using video had led to a better result. The other interesting point mentioned about this story was the casting of Ingrid Pitt. Pennant explained that it had originally been a male part but he felt that changing the sex of a part often led to interesting characterisations especially for something like this that was set in the future. He also gave examples

Christopher Tranchell. © Stephen Payne



of other *Doctor Who* stories where he had done the same. It was almost always males changed to females as he had found writers tended to write more for males.

Near the end of Pennants interview it was pointed out that he had worked with three Producers of *Doctor Who*; "what difference had he noticed with each?" He replied that "Over the years it has become a different sort of job. JNT spends a lot of time promoting the series. Philip (Hinchcliffe) was able to devote time to treating it just as a programme, Graham (Williams) attempted to hold on to it despite increasing pressures". He explained that what this meant was that directors were more independent these days.

Actor Chris Tranchell, a new face to *Doctor Who* conventions, was on stage later that day. Director Gerald Blake was the man responsible for all the parts he had in *Doctor Who*. Most memorable was the part of Time Lord Guard in "Invasion of Time" who married the Doctor's companion Leela. He felt that this adventure was the right sort of story for *Doctor Who*. He knew Tom Baker well and said that Tom was great socially, "very witty and intelligent". He felt that it was surprising how long it had taken before Tom's character had come across in the programme. Chris described acting as "trying to find yourself". He explained that he is very introvert but extrovert on stage. He went on to say that he has very strong feelings about the parts he plays, he will not do adverts and more recently, characters on stage which he does not believe in. He likes Fringe theatre but would like to direct or at least have more say in production.

Last of the three guests on stage was Richard Franklin who played the part of Captain Yates during the Pertwee days. His main topic of discussion was the up and coming stage play that he was putting on for the Edinburgh Festival "Recall UNIT or the Case of the Missing Tea Bag". Richard had high hopes for the play and told how he even had interest expressed from the USA about it. Richard's main work nowadays is producing plays six months of the year in Scandinavia.

Gary Russell interviewing Richard Franklin. © Stephen Payne



The Great Tea Bag Mystery

Reporter: Jason Kinsen

Richard Franklin, Yates. © Liam Rudden



'Recall UNIT' written and produced by Richard Franklin was put on at this year's Edinburgh Fringe Festival. When coming to review this play, the difficulty lies in how? I propose to do it in two parts. Firstly looking at it as just a play, then from the point of view of someone interested in *Doctor Who*.

As the Middleham Theatre Company's second production, 'Recall UNIT' had me looking forward to something interesting. After having seen their first production, *Shakespeare was a Hunchback*, put on during the last festival, also by Richard Franklin. *Hunchback* was funny, zany, and also carried a message, succeeding for me in restoring Richard III's good name. However *Hunchback* in parts went over the top in political points, this fate also befell 'Recall UNIT'.

'Recall UNIT' had a very loose story based around an agent of the Master. Miss Bergbo, signing over the Falklands to the "Argies". The UNIT team trying to stop her. I say loosely as the story phased back and forth from madness to sheer lunacy. Features of the story included the Fragooids, a race of mutated Daleks that looked like men in drag, wearing Mrs Thatcher and Ronald Reagan masks. There was also a shrunk Mrs Thatcher, two fake *Doctor Who* fans. Not forgetting a character called "Stallion", who came over more like a flat babycham. These were the contents of this one-and-a-half hours of bedlam.

The play started with Richard Franklin and John Levene being unemployed ex-*Doctor Who* stars. They were auditioning for a role in a production that Miss Bergbo was taking to the good old Falklands. Dick Kattles played, Nicholas Courtney. The real Mr Courtney being on a secret mission for UNIT. Dick Kattles was really Major Molesworth, he took the Brigadiers role very well, and was funny. After about fifteen minutes of the play the UNIT team were in drag, and didn't miss an opportunity thereafter to whip into women's clothing! They did get into UNIT costumes for some of the play, after the Brigadier recalled UNIT, Benton being a sergeant. Near the end of the play all the UNIT team were in drag, Richard Franklin as Queen Elizabeth I. The play degenerated into Cinderella, with Benton and Yates as the ugly sisters. The prize for a person whose foot fitted the Falkland's slipper, was marriage to General Gatiari, and the Islands.

The hero of the story was Stallion, who Miss Bergbo told us would be a

star, I presume that someone had doped her tea. The brave Stallion strained our ears to his version of some old Elvis songs, showed the audience how butch he was by doing four one-arm press-ups singing another Elvis song, this time in extra tight leather trousers. As if these feats were not enough to win our hearts he demonstrated his mastery of Karate, by punching the hell out of thin air (invisible Dragoids), and beating Benton senseless. Benton had just offered Stallion £1000 for putting a bomb under Mrs Thatcher's chair.

Finally, when you thought it was all over, the supposed Dalek supremo appeared, looking like a cheap fan copy of an ordinary Dalek. Telling us that not even it could reinflate Mrs Thatcher, thus leaving us with Norman Tebbit destined for PM.

I cannot finish without mentioning the *Doctor Who* side of the play. 'Recall UNIT' sounded quite good and the prospect of seeing two old favourites back in the roles was exciting. Also even though Nicholas Courtney could not be in the play, we heard his voice on tape telling Mike Yates on the 'phone to treat Major Holesworth as him. Another nice touch was that John Scott Martin did the voice of the Dalek. However, even all these touches didn't help make the play any better.

Not wishing to be a Philistine, I was quite prepared to watch the play as a spoof of the UNIT years. Just having the play re-light some of the fond memories I have of the show in its heyday would have satisfied me! Unfortunately it did not do this, and I was almost glad that Nick Courtney did not appear in this concoction of madness. I don't think he would have looked great in a woman's salvation army costume.

You would think after this that I hated the play. This is not so, it did make me laugh in parts. Overall though it was dragged out (no pun intended), far too political and just didn't get anywhere. It didn't succeed either as a play or a *Doctor Who* production. There were far better plays on during the festival than this one, although it did have its good points, and was quite funny in parts.

To anyone interested in *Doctor Who* I cannot see how you could not want to see it, as in many ways it was written for 'Doctor Who' fans. Finally, perhaps the fact that this production was staged, shows that there is a need to resurrect UNIT properly on television. Until then, this diverse play by Richard Franklin is all we have, and thanks must go to him for at least attempting it.



John Levene (Sergeant Benton). © Stuart Halliday

TALKING ABOUT TRIPODS



Henry and Will pause for a quick photo on their way to the White Mountains. © BBC

with Christopher Barry and Richard Marson

RM: Did you have anything to do with the start of the show?

CB: No, I was doing other work though I think I'm right in saying that I was considered. I only worked on the last few episodes of the first series. Naturally, I was delighted to be asked to also work on this, the second of the three seasons that we are committed to make and so far it's been very satisfying – a lot of hard work, yes, but if it was easy where would the challenge be?

RM: How have you kept up the link with series one and how would you describe the show overall?

CB: I don't really have to concern myself with the links between series – as a director I'm only directly responsible for my part in the whole set up. The real responsibility for the running elements of the story lies with the producer, Richard Bates, who I may say, has dedicated nearly three years on the project and is obviously living and breathing *Tripods* from the completed first series right through to the third series which is still being planned but which is certainly going to be made. Part of my job is to make my episodes fit in with the whole, so yes I have watched what has been finished and I've also read the

books, which I enjoyed very much indeed.

Overall, the series I suppose has connections with *The War of the Worlds* and, if you remember it, a series some time back called *The Survivors*. I think it will be very popular – there's something about shows like *Survivors* and *Tripods* – and indeed *Day of the Triffids* that holds appeal...

RM: A sort of audience masochism, perhaps?

CB: That's right. I do think it will appeal particularly to younger audiences – indeed I believe our time slot is the old *Doctor Who* one, on a Saturday. The older generation don't like to be scared so much!

RM: Is the series frightening?

CB: Yes, but not I hope in an overtly horrific way. I'm only speaking for myself here but the debate about violence is a bit ridiculous in television terms – *Tripods* I hope will be an alarming fantasy, but there's no way anyone can call it a video nasty. It's a bit of an insult really – I've been around in the business long enough to know what is and what isn't acceptable.

RM: Has the show got a big budget?

CB: Well, yes and no again. I mean, there's never too much money

spent, it's all too carefully planned for that. We are shooting abroad in Switzerland using video rather than film – still quite unusual for this organisation (the BBC). That's a nice luxury but as you'll discover it's pretty essential to the storyline. There's also a lot of effects work and by that I mean more than you're used to in *Doctor Who*. So we have to have a reasonable budget, otherwise it wouldn't be worth the effort.

RM: Was *Doctor Who* useful in working on *Tripods*?

CB: Oh absolutely. The CSO is so massive and so complicated on *Tripods* that when we had our last studio session the entire set was blue. It would be an enormous headache if it hadn't been for the sort of trailblazing work I and my contemporaries experienced on 'Who'. We have to be very painstaking about it still – it's very much a precision operation, but that said, because of those early experiences it's a lot more efficient and a lot more realistic – both off and on screen; on screen for the viewers and off screen in that we know exactly what can and what can't be accomplished.

RM: What's been the biggest problem with the show to date?

CB: Undoubtedly the effects work. The actors naturally find it a dread-

ful chore to stand about so much and then to have to act to nothing in particular. It is of course a great challenge as well. But for me *Tripods* has involved an enormous amount of planning, setting up and sheer hard work. I'm not complaining I hasten to add – it's all been most rewarding.

RM: How much of the second series are you directing and will you be working on the third season?

CB: I'm directing six of the thirteen episodes of this second season, but beyond that I'm afraid I've got absolutely no idea. Doing it so far certainly hasn't put me off, but at the moment as I'm sure you can appreciate I'm really too involved with these episodes to start worrying or speculating about the future.

RM: Finally then, do you predict success for the *Tripods*?

CB: One can never be totally certain of course but I personally can see no reason for it to be anything but a popular success. It's been pre-sold abroad so I think it will definitely be a financial success – besides the Corporation have shown a lot of faith by committing themselves to the three series. I only hope and trust that we can live up to that faith and produce the goods.

FANDERSON AT BLOOMSBURY

Reporter: Stephen Payne

Gerry Anderson's productions have always had an enormous following in Britain. The popularity was at its height during the late 1960's due to the hugely popular "*Thunderbirds*" series. This not only had a large children's audience but, attracted by the wonderful style and skilful direction, an amazing following among adults which can't be bad for a "serious" puppet series.

Gerry Anderson started his production of puppet series in the mid 1950's with a simple young children's series called "*The Adventures of Twizzle*" and followed this with a similar series "*Torchy*". Gerry became more adventurous and went on to make a half-hour magical western series "*Four Feather Falls*" in 1958. The first puppet series involving a science fiction element and its premise created by Gerry was "*Supercar*" in 1959. This was followed by others: "*Fireball XL5*" (1961), "*Stingray*" (1962) – the first United Kingdom television series in colour, "*Thunderbirds*" (1964), "*Captain Scarlet*" (1967), "*Joe 90*" (1968), and "*Secret Service*" (1969).

After these Gerry went on to live action and produced the much-loved "*U.F.O.*" He followed this with

"*The Protectors*" and then "*Space 1999*".

A rather difficult gap for Gerry followed but more recently he has returned to production again with a science fiction puppet series "*Terrahawks*".

About the same time that this was in its early stages Pamela Barnes brought her energetic and lively

character to organise the fans of Gerry Anderson's programmes. She started a group called "*Fanderson*" with a quarterly magazine called "*S.I.G.*", (Spectrum Is Go, a phrase from the series "*Captain Scarlet*"). This has gone from strength to strength and now boasts a circulation of 3500. Their first convention, in 1982, was held at Leeds and attracted 450 members. The following year the convention moved its location to London and was attended this time by 800 fans. August this year, at the Bloomsbury Crest Hotel, London, saw the third convention with a large array of guests. These included Gerry's first business partner, Arthur Provis, and his latest partner, Christopher Burr, actor Ed Bishop, star of "*U.F.O.*" and a host of behind-the-scenes people of which Nicholas Parsons was one! He did the voice of Tex Tucker in "*Four Feather Falls*".

The main guest was of course Gerry Anderson himself. He was around for a great deal of the convention weekend, meeting fans with praises and comments to make to him. He appeared on stage during the Saturday with Arthur (partner in AP films), Tony Bell (director of *Terrahawks*), Steve Begg (the latest



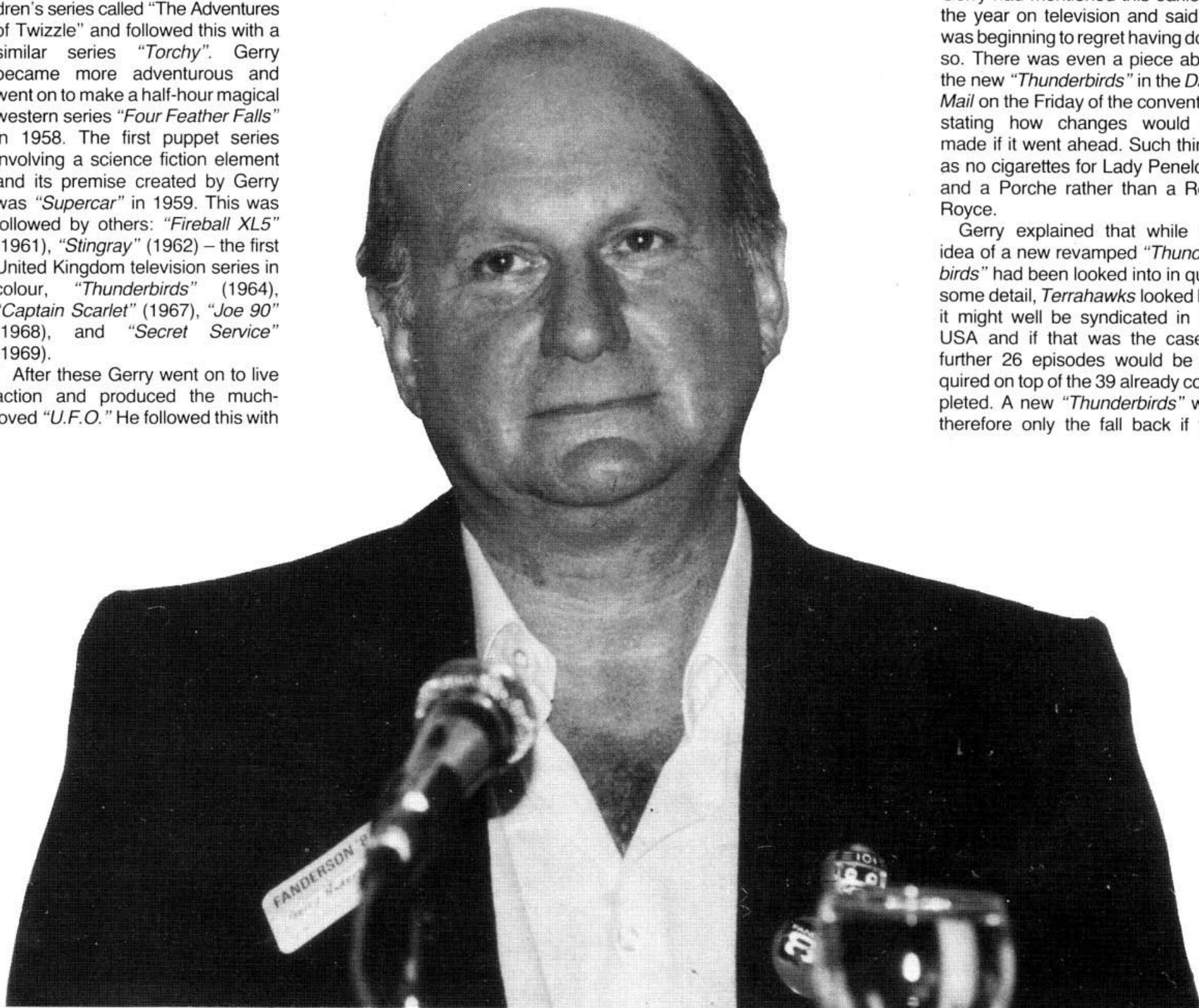
Christopher Burr.

special effects director), Bob Bell (associate producer of *Terrahawks* and art director of many Anderson productions), and Christopher Burr. Gerry wanted to mention and pay tribute to Barry Gray who had died earlier in the year. It was Barry Gray that had created "*Four Feather Falls*" and did most of the music for Gerry's programmes and films.

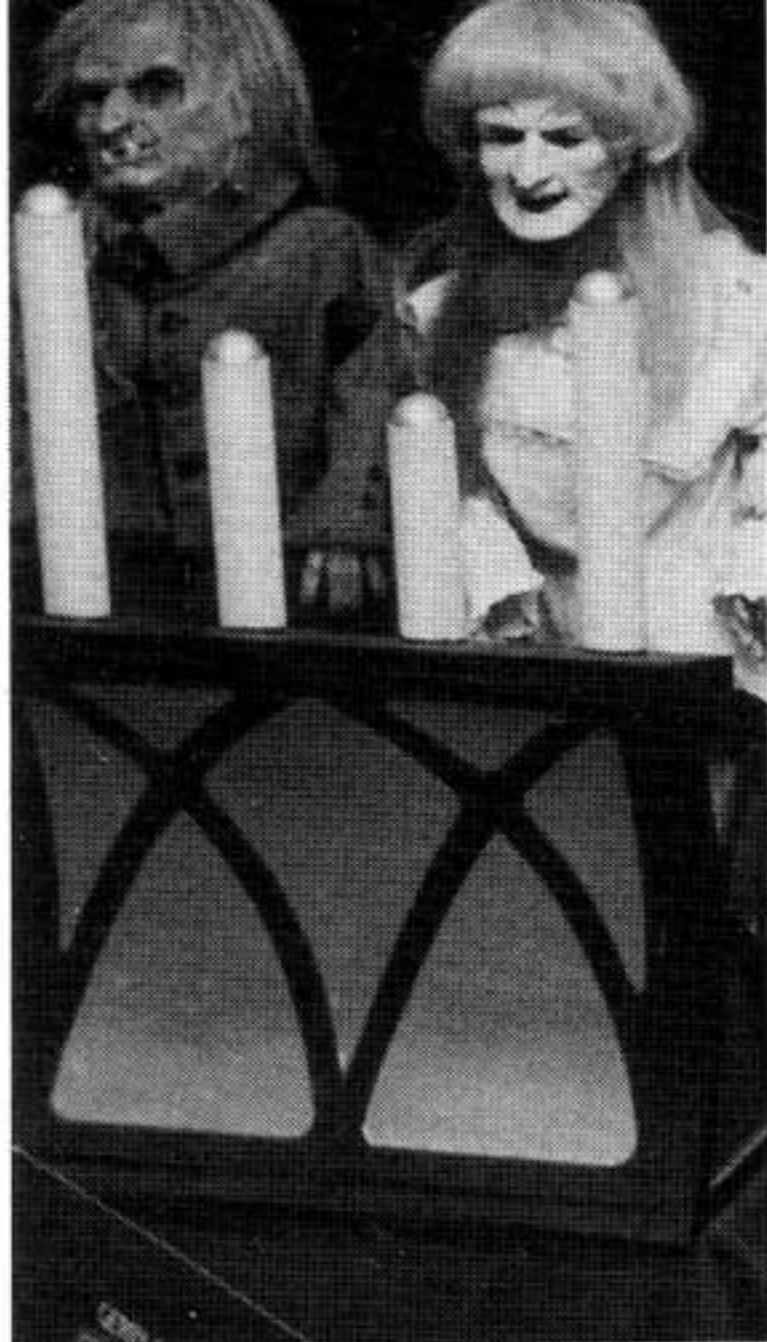
The possibility of a new "*Thunderbirds*" series was one of the first things that Gerry was asked about. Gerry had mentioned this earlier in the year on television and said he was beginning to regret having done so. There was even a piece about the new "*Thunderbirds*" in the *Daily Mail* on the Friday of the convention stating how changes would be made if it went ahead. Such things as no cigarettes for Lady Penelope and a Porche rather than a Rolls Royce.

Gerry explained that while the idea of a new revamped "*Thunderbirds*" had been looked into in quite some detail, *Terrahawks* looked like it might well be syndicated in the USA and if that was the case a further 26 episodes would be required on top of the 39 already completed. A new "*Thunderbirds*" was therefore only the fall back if the

Anderson is quizzed on various kinds of string-pulling.







Stars from Terrahawks (photos © Stephen Payne). Surround stars from Supercar. © ITC

"Terrahawks" deal did not go through. Gerry stated that if "Thunderbirds" was done he would not go back to marionettes because of the problems that came with controlling them from above. With the "Terrahawks"-type puppets, controlled by



hand from below, it enabled much more control and a quicker response which is needed for today's style of direction. Christopher Burr added: "While the puppets may be different today we still have to do a lot of string pulling!"

Gerry was asked about the cartoon "Thunderbirds" series - "Thunderbirds 2086". He told how the copyright of the series lies with ITC, not himself. The ITC offices in New York and Japan had thought it a good idea and had it made. Gerry Anderson has not in fact seen any of it or had anything to do with it.

The subject of "Terrahawks" and the order of the episodes was mentioned. One of the attendees had checked the thirteen episodes of the series that had been shown so far with the shooting order that had been published, only to find that they did not tie up. Gerry explained that this was because "Terrahawks" was a new start into a puppet series, and after such a long time they had to get back into the swing of things. They found that as they went on they were getting better and better. So rather than have to keep the better episodes to later it was decided to show a fair mix for the best scheduling results. Another question concerned the fact the Ninestein in the series was a clone. Why had he not been killed off as this would mean they could have a different interpretation to the character? Gerry said that in one of the episodes yet to be shown he was in fact killed off? Because they wanted the series to be shown in any order they had opted to keep the new clone Ninestein the same. One of the reasons for wanting the episodes to be interchangeable is to save on the number of prints that need to be made of each programme if it gets syndicated in the United States. The idea is to rush the prints back and forth across the one-hundred or so stations and this would mean that

the order of transmissions would vary.

The audience was informed that the British transmissions were going to continue on Sunday, 23rd September 1984, at 4.30 pm and that it would be simultaneously networked, which they were all pleased with.

A question about "U.F.O.", which is very popular among young Gerry Anderson fans, came up. "Why were some of the episodes shown late at night?" This was apparently because they were considered too adult for the time slot it originally had. Gerry went on to mention that there was a gap between the shooting of the last eight episodes because one of the main actors had broken his ankle. A new director had to be brought in as the other was now unavailable. He had influenced the scripts which Gerry had considered altering but thought he was just being old-fashioned. Gerry said the late night slot made him "sick in the guts".

Throughout the weekend a great number of old episodes were shown, ranging from "Twizzle" right up to the then unseen "Terrahawks" episodes. Pamela Barnes said that amongst the fans "Thunderbirds" was favourite, followed by "U.F.O." and then "Captain Scarlet".

Other events of the weekend included a fancy-dress competition, a

mastermind competition, where the competitors chose their favourite Anderson programme on which to answer questions, an auction and a disco. It all seemed to go very well and I am sure an enjoyable time was had by everyone.

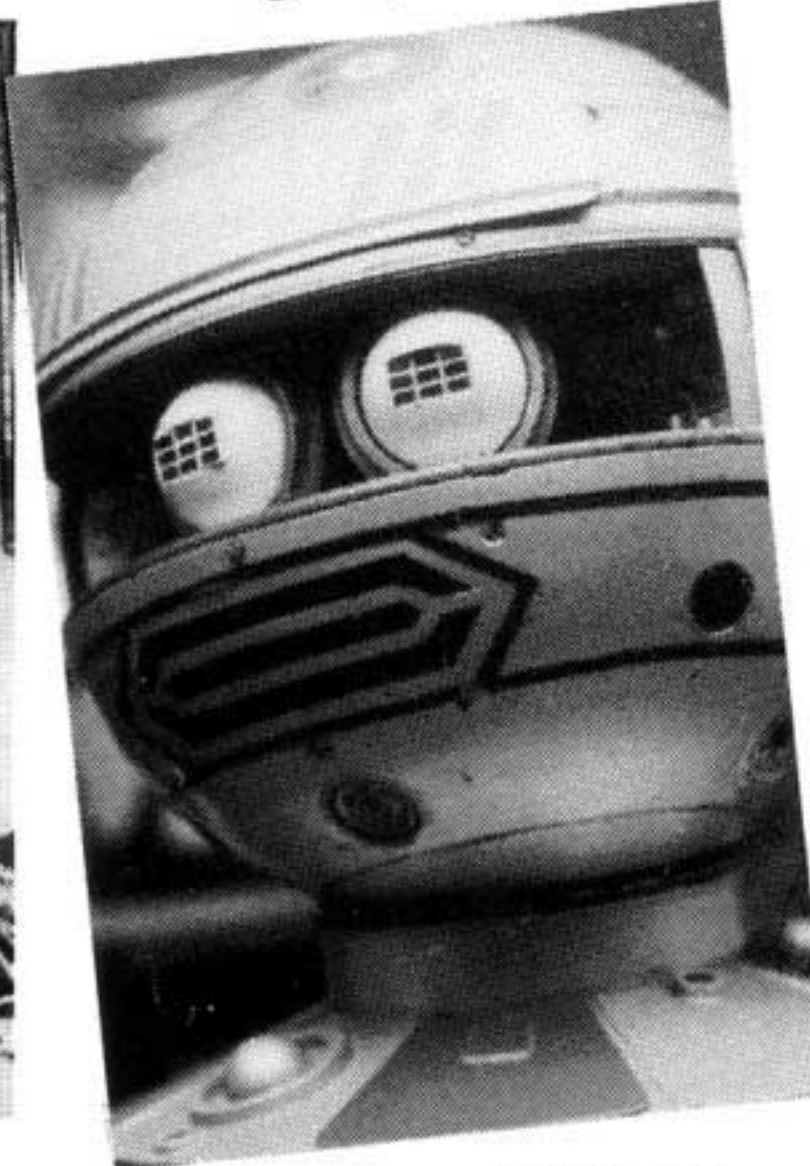
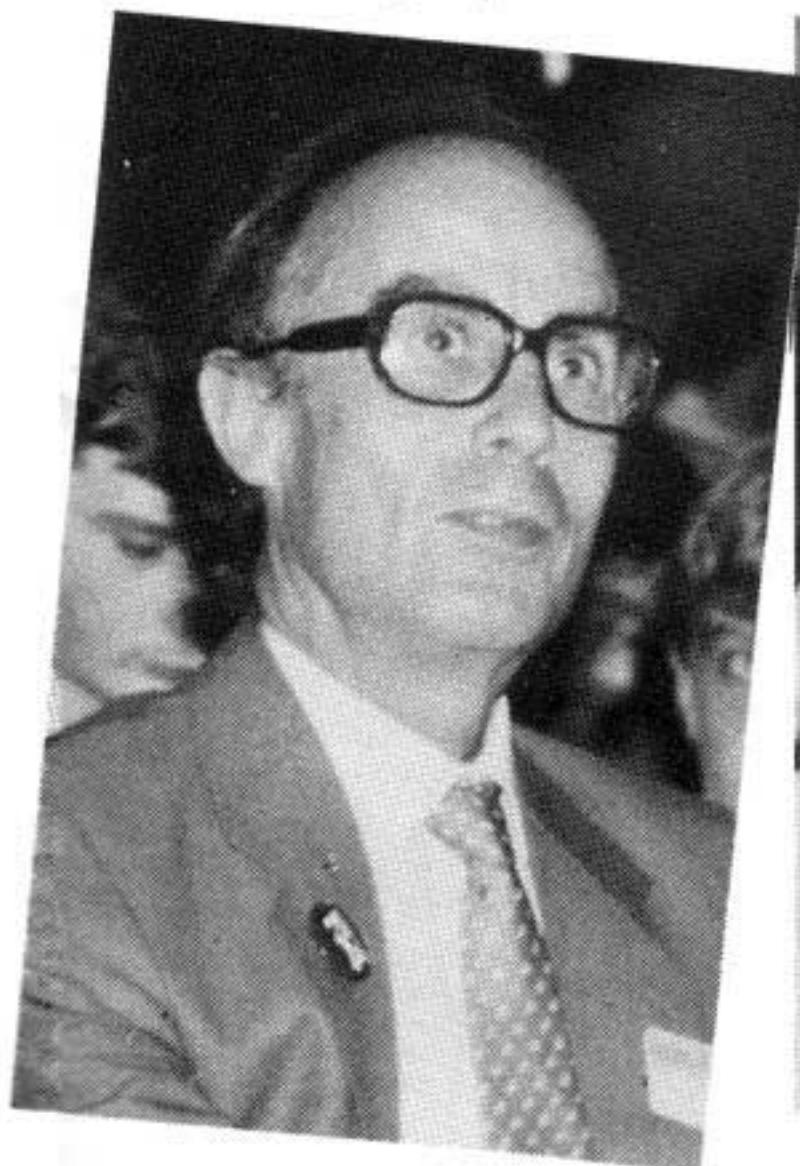


A year's membership to *Fanderson*, the official Gerry Anderson Appreciation Society, costs £6.50. This includes four issues of the club magazine, four photographs, and various offers that the club makes available. If you are interested you should write to:

Fanderson
PO Box 308
London
W4 1QL

Pamela asks that you enclose an SAE or, if from abroad, two International Reply Coupons.

Left to right: David Graham. Pamela Barnes, Gerry Anderson and Arthur Provis. Zeroid from Terrahawks. All © Stephen Payne





THE TRIPODS

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